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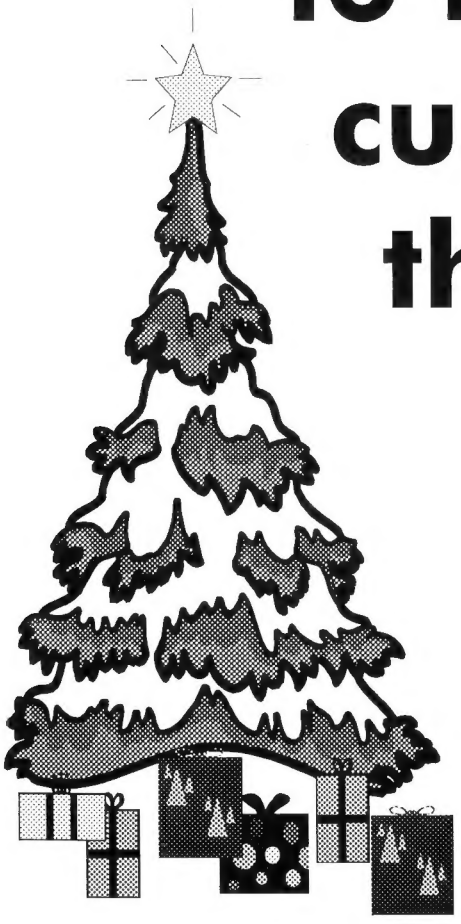

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From N America, tel: 01144 181 444 2002
Fax: 01144 181 883 0302

Published monthly as an independent trade paper for the comics industry by Quality Communications Ltd. Editor/publisher: Derek G. Skinn. Associate editor: Sarah Bolesworth. News editor: Phil Hall. Editorial assistant: Kerry-Ann Hurley. Printed by East End Offset, London E3 (0171-538 2521)

SUBSCRIPTIONS

UK & Ireland: £12.00 for 12 issues.
USA & Canada: $60 US for 12 issues (air).
Australasia: £40 sterling for 12 issues (air).
Mainland Europe: £20 for 12 issues.

Make all payments to Comics International at: Comics International, (Subscriptions Dept), 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD

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A Quality Communications magazine

nEWS
·AMERICA·

Death looms on the horizon

IN THE wake of the final issue of **The Sandman**, Neil Gaiman tells a tale of music, mortality, friendship and love in the new four-issue mini-series **Death: The Time of Your Life**.

Gaiman is reunited with the successful **Death: The High Cost of Living** art team of Chris Bachalo and Mark Buckingham on the sequel to 1994's critically-acclaimed Death best seller.

Time of Your Life brings The Sandman's elder sister back into the spotlight in a story dealing with life, relationships, fame and the power of love in the face of Death. The story is set a number of years after Death's last visit to Earth as a mortal.

The main plot centres on lesbian lovers Hazel and Foxglove and how their relationship has reached an all-important crossroads. Foxglove is on the verge of a burgeoning musical career, but is asked to keep her sexual preferences quiet while she is in the public eye.

Foxglove has to choose between being true both to herself and the woman with who she's chosen to share her life and her longing for fame and fortune.

Death becomes involved with several souls dearest to Foxglove, Hazel among them. The singer must then discover whether she is strong enough to follow Hazel into Death's realm and if either of them will return alive.

Chris Bachalo and Mark Buckingham, who have recently finished an immensely popular run on Marvel's off-beat mutant title **Generation X**, are expected to team-up with Gaiman again for the conclusion of the Death trilogy in early 1997.

Death: The Time of Your Life 1, which features covers by Dave (**Sandman**) McKean for all four issues, ships on February 13 and retails for $2.95.

*Above: Chris Bachalo's preliminary sketch for the new **Death** press poster, being released simultaneously with the first issue of the **Death: The Time of Your Life** four-issue mini-series on February 13. The poster retails for $5.50.*

Tying in with the **Death** series is a new **Death** retail poster featuring original artwork from Bachalo *(pictured above)*. The 22" by 34" poster ships the same week as the series and retails for $5.50.

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New readers: begin here

Comics International *is a monthly industry newspaper devoted to the comics medium. As such, it provides details of forthcoming UK and US comics and related items, together with reviews and commentary on current titles.*

Certain products mentioned are not available through regular news agent outlets, but only from the 'direct sale' comics specialist retailers and mail order companies. Details of specialist outlets are advertised throughout the magazine, and a listing of the major specialists in Britain is given in our Retail Index and Mail Order Index sections.

Shipping dates *mentioned for North American titles are the dates copies leave their printers to be air-freighted to distributors for direct sale outlets approximately one week later. These dates and titles do not relate to on-sale dates or titles for news agent copies.*

The Marvel and DC titles on news trade distribution are on sale in the UK approximately two to three months after the air-freighted copies can be bought through specialist shops and mail order companies dealing with 'advance imports'. Because of the additional shipping costs incurred, these advance copies are sold at a higher price than the UK cover price.

American dollar prices *are listed for US titles with most UK comic shops converting at the rate of 80p = $1.*

Most reputable mail order dealers bear a CoBRA seal on their advertisements. For full details concerning advertisers displaying this Mail Order Protection seal, see page 82.

IN BRIEF

Quick as a dart

SPINNING out of the failed Image team book **Freak Force**, one of the team members is to get her own spotlight comic.

Dart 1, by newcomers Bruce Love, Julie Ditrich and Jozef Szekeres, is a one shot showcasing the former Freak Force leader. It retails for $2.50 and ships in February.

Walt's Zero hour

WEAPON Zero returns in a new ongoing series to be produced by the original creators.

Walt Simonson and Joe Benitez reunite the characters in a new adventure, and set up what proves to be a distinctly different direction for Image team books.

The first major hurdle the team has to cross in the $2.50 issue 1 is that of coming to terms with their origins in diverse periods of Earth history — past, present and future.

Nausicaa ends

HAYAO Miyazaki, creator of the critically acclaimed, environmentally oriented tale of **Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind**, is drawing the series to a close.

Viz Comics is publishing the final part of book five — the last issue of the young girl's epic adventures — on 13 February. Retailing for $2.95, the concluding issue finds Nausicaa confronting the mysterious keepers of the Tomb of Shuwa and attempting to free humanity from the awesome weapons that caused its destruction.

Gen: Hughes

GEN 13: Ordinary Heroes is a two-issue series featuring the successful teen group created by Jim Lee. Fan-favourite artist Adam Hughes is the writer and artist for the series.

Hughes is joined by Birmingham-based Mark Farmer for a story which pits the teenagers against a bizarre creature capable of destroying the city in which they are living.

The first issue ships in February and retails for $2.50.

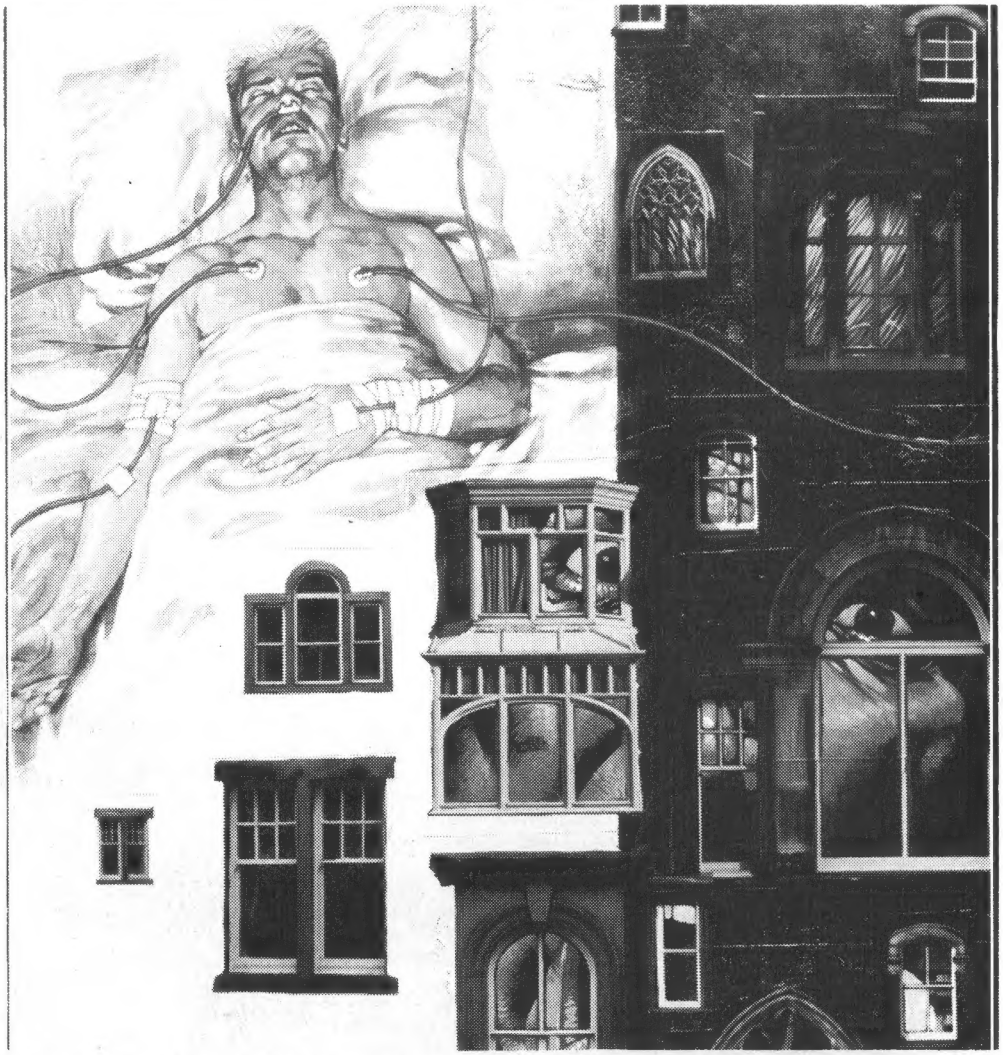
Grateful Dog

GRATEFUL Dead lyricist Robert Hunter and acclaimed comics illustrator Timothy (**Jonah Hex**) Truman have joined forces to produce a fully painted one-shot for DC's Vertigo imprint.

Dog Moon is a horror/love story about a truck driver who takes the newly dead to their resting place and the strange events which follow his fateful encounter with a dead woman, Tess. The $6.95, 64-page one shot carries a mature readers label and ships on 6 February.

Freaky people, freaky book

PARADOX Press, a DC imprint, has announced that its next Factoid Book is a 224-page exploration of the world of "freaks" by cartoonist Gahan Wilson. **The Big Book of Freaks** (in the same format as **The Big Book of Death**) focuses on humans' physical and mental quirks. It ships in February, retailing at $14.95.



*Hell calling: One of comics' more enigmatic figures faces a desperate battle. John Constantine, the man who walks a tightrope between Heaven and Hell, is to undergo his most strenuous ordeal yet in the landmark 100th issue of **Hellblazer**. Constantine's body lies in a coma while his mind is transported to the darkest corner of his personal hell and an unwilling reunion with his long-deceased father. As father and son unravel the knots of their stormy relationship, Constantine's arch-adversary, the First of the Fallen, schemes to bring about his downfall. **Hellblazer** 100 is written by Paul Jenkins and illustrated by Sean Phillips. The $3.50 48-page special ships on February 20.*

WaRP Graphics to discontinue Elfquest line

WARP Graphics has announced the cancellation of its **Elfquest** titles, taking effect from March 1996.

It is not clear what Warp's future activities are likely to be, but a press release from the company's marketing manager, Steve Thomas, stated: "After 18 years of **Elfquest** adventures, the quest finally comes to an end. The question remains: What next for **Elfquest**?"

Warp has made some cutbacks in its comics line and restricted continuing production to the three most successful titles only.

These will conclude the epic storyline which, during its history, has been published by no less than four companies.

Despite the cancellations, Warp is releasing a full-colour special in February to tie up any loose ends.

The mysterious Wavedancers return in a one-shot by ex-Defiant creator Kathryn Bolinger and Steve Blevins. It is scheduled to ship on February 29 and retails for $2.95.

Jink, by John Ostrander and Denis Fujitake, will finish with issue 12, as will **The Rebels**. **Shards** is cancelled at issue 16, and **Elfquest: Hidden Years** ends at issue 29.

ELFQUEST MAKES A SPLASH IN '96

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Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld return to Marvel in work for hire U-turn

IN ONE of the most controversial editorial decisions in Marvel's history, the publisher is to recruit the services of two former Marvel creators and their studios in a deal which will mean the complete revamping of some of the oldest characters in the Marvel Universe.

Key titles to go to Image

Although the departure from Marvel of the Image core creators can be argued to have led to Marvel's currently weakened state, 'rebel' leaders Jim Lee (and his Wildstorm Productions) and Rob Liefeld (with his Extreme Studios) are said to be handling the creative chores on high-profile Marvel titles from late next year. Affected are:

The Avengers
The Fantastic Four
Iron Man
Captain America

The arrangement is an outside contract agreement, and the studios of two of the founders of rival company Image will be employed on a purely "work-for-hire" basis, with Marvel having the final editorial say over both story content and sub-contracted studio creators working on the titles. Against this constraint, the Image men are understood to have negotiated far better royalty agreements than current Marvel artists or writers in addition to what is believed to be a massive signing-on fee.

Nineties topicality

At the moment, it is believed that Lee and Liefeld will be starting at the very beginning, inventing new origins and new looks for the MTV-raised 1990s comic reader.

The titles will restart with first issues (to boost the sales on what have become flagging Marvel cornerstones) and will carry the Marvel banner.

The amount of autonomy is still unclear, but it is understood that if the two high-profile creators or their studios fail to meet any of the stringent guidelines set out by Marvel, the comics publisher has the ultimate veto and can pull the books immediately.

*Above: A familiar scene for the last 25 years, Doc Samson battles The Incredible Hulk. But possibly for the last time. Under the control of Rob Liefeld, both Bruce Banner and Captain America are likely to be going head-to-head again, as the Hulk will probably feature (along with Thor) as a major supporting character for the new-look **Avengers** title.*

Both Lee and Liefeld are said to have each agreed to produce 12 issues of **The Avengers** and **The Fantastic Four**, while **Iron Man** and **Captain America** will be sub-contracted by them.

The deal is believed to have taken place because of shares in Marvel Entertainment Group plummeting and reaching rock-bottom in the US's Dow-Jones index. It is viewed that this is in part a cost-cutting measure to reduce the company's vulnerability through overheads and to re-establish some of Marvel's most familiar icons, in the Image style.

The studios assigned to the titles involved are said to be: **Captain America** and **The Avengers** to Liefeld's Extreme Studios, while **Iron Man** and **The Fantastic Four** go to Lee's Wildstorm Productions.

But possibly the most shocking related news is that one of Marvel's best selling titles will become a casualty following the agreement. **The Incredible Hulk** is being cancelled.

This has been confirmed by series writer Peter David on the Internet. It is believed that the Hulk features in Liefeld's plans for the relaunched **Avengers** and Marvel is prepared to sacrifice its best-selling title outside of the X-books and Spider-family in favour of potential high earnings from the Image-produced books.

Marvel is also to cancel **Thor**, another book which, until the recent Warren Ellis and Mike Deodato revamp, was selling very poorly. Rob Liefeld reportedly wants Deodato to draw the new **Captain America** but the Brazilian artist's exclusive contract had tied him to **Thor** for another eight months. **Thor**'s cancellation allows Deodato to work on Marvel's first-ever superhero, created in 1940.

Creator casualties

Mark Waid, one of the first casualties of the new deal, has been fired. Waid writes **Captain America**, and was about to start on **The Avengers**.

He has said that as it is something he has dreamt of doing since he was 12 years old, he would still like to write **Captain America** after the changeover to Image creators. But this appears to be highly unlikely.

Reports are that many of the freelance artists and writers working on the books affected have been told that their time on the titles in now finite. It is believed that all the comics involved will be allowed to end "naturally" — letting current plots run their course, but to finish prior to the new look anticipated for October 1996.

Marvel's future?

Any official announcement is being held back until the New Year, presumably to boost the deflated share prices in what appears to be a move by Marvel's management towards contracting out all but the Spider-Man and X-Men families.

Avengers disassemble: Marvel breaks up its line as Iron Man flies away to Jim Lee, Captain America waves the flag for Rob Liefeld and Thor heads off for parts unknown.

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Scott Free in Miracle return

THE JACK Kirby-created "World's Greatest Escape Artist", **Mister Miracle**, returns to comics in new ongoing series from DC Comics.

Spinning off from catastrophic events unfolding in its companion title, **New Gods**, this is DC's second new series reviving the "new mythology" created by Jack Kirby.

Scott Free, aka Mister Miracle, was born on New Genesis but was raised on the nightmare world of Apokolips as part of a pact between New Genesis's Highfather and Apokolips's Darkseid.

Mister Miracle survived a hellish childhood to become the most human of all of the New Gods. He is also an unparalleled escape artist — a necessity on his devilish world — and a hero of the Justice League.

The series is written by ex-**Justice League** editor Kevin Dooley with art by Steve Crespo and Marcio Morais.

The series was first offered in September 1995 but has now been resolicited with a more concerted marketing push behind it.

Mister Miracle checklist:

Mister Miracle 1-18 (March 1971 to February 1974): Written and illustrated by Jack Kirby.

Mister Miracle 19-25 (September 1977 to August 1978): Marshall Rogers art issues 19-22; Michael Golden on 23-25.

Mister Miracle Special (1987) Steve Rude's tribute to Jack Kirby.

Mister Miracle (January 1989 to June 1991) 1-28.

More titles from Extreme

EXTREME Studios, under the Image umbrella, has another six new titles beginning in March.

● **Black & White**, by Art and Pamela Thibert, is an ongoing series featuring the married mercenary team. The first issue retails for $2.50.

● **Bloodpool**'s four-issue mini has been adapted into an ongoing series. Jo Duffy and Pat Lee resume creative duties on the $2.50 title.

● **Cyberpunx** is a new Rob Liefeld project featuring computer generated superheroes. Drawn in a Japanimation-style, the first issue retails for $2.50.

● **Glory Lingerie** is a self-explanatory one-shot with various Extreme creators contributing to the $2.50 special.

● **Lethal** is a new series written and drawn by Marat Mychaels.

● **Man Against Time** is published in collaboration with Motown Machineworks. The series is produced by Brett Lewis and Gino DiCicco. The $2.25 title tells a story simultaneously in the past, present and future.

IN BRIEF

Miller's back

LEGEND-creator Frank Miller's new **Sin City** series comes from Dark Horse in February.

Sin City: That Yellow Bastard tells the story of Hartigan, a 30-year veteran of the Sin City police department. He is a man with just one more hour to go before retirement. But before he can put his uniform into mothballs, a "snout" rings with information about his single unsolved case.

Hartigan decides he is going to pull this thorn from his side once and for all, and he is determined to go out with a bang. The six-issue series ships from February, retailing for $2.95.

X-Ultraverse

THE NIGHT Man/Gambit is a four-issue series from Marvel/Malibu featuring the popular X-Man and the critically acclaimed Ultraverse hero.

John Ostrander and Kim Yale (to whom Ostrander is married) will write the $1.95 series, for which newcomer Dietrich Smith provides the artwork.

Maximum Thunder

T.H.U.N.D.E.R. Agents, having made a shortlived appearance in Penthouse's **Omni Comix** (a strip by George Carragone and Paul Gulacy), is reappearing under a new imprint.

Rob Liefeld's Maximum Press is to publish the Wally Wood-created series in the new year. Liefeld will coordinate with Jim Valentino, Chap Yaep, Patrick Lee and Dan Fraga on the proposed ongoing project. The first issue retails for $2.95 and ships in February.

Tekno team-up

I-BOTS/LADY Justice Crossover is written by Steven Grant, with artwork from Pat Broderick.

Missing Killiane (of the I-Bots) is found, but is possessed by Lady Justice. The first issue retails for $2.25 and ships in February 1996.

Last of Love & Rockets

AFTER 14 years and 50 issues, Gilbert, Jaime and Mario Hernandez are bringing the seminal **Love & Rockets** to a conclusion.

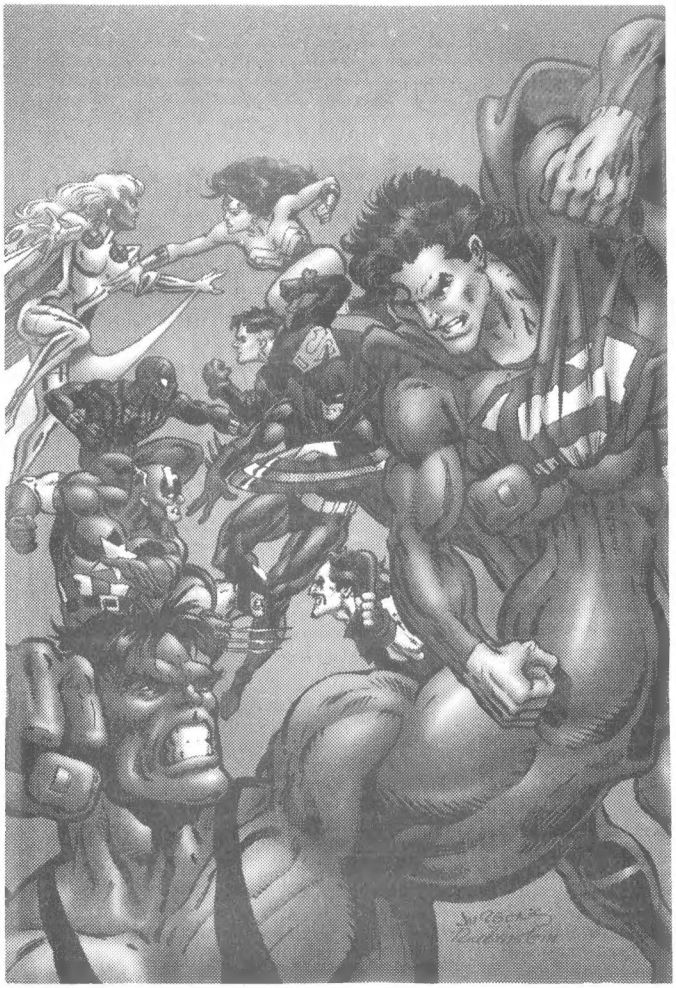
Love & Rockets 50 features new story and art. Jaime Hernandez has written the opening story — the third and final chapter of *Bob Robertson* — in which Hopey must decide if she is going to Los Angeles with her band or stay instead with Maggie in Texas.

Gilbert's contribution is a farewell to the residents of Palomar. The Heartbreak Soup series draws to a close with a 24-page story, entitled *Chelo's Burden*. One of Palomar's long-term residents leaves the village for good after the small Central American country has been devasted by an earthquake.

Mario Hernandez returns to the comic for the first time since issue 40 with a 15-page political thriller, *Fever Scars the Heart*.

Gilbert and Jaime are both hard at work on a new project, scheduled to be published by Fantagraphics in late summer 1996. **Love & Rockets** 50 ships in March and retails for $5.95.

Marvel - DC crossover expands



BY THE time this issue of **Comics International** reaches the shops, the outcome of the voting in the **Marvel vs DC/DC vs Marvel** ballot will have been reached. These results will be incorporated into the third part of the ultimate crossover.

Initial reports indicate that this could well be the biggest event in both comics and the direct market's history. Not since the X-Men explosion in the early Nineties, when **X-Men** 1 sold over eight million copies, on its release, has the trade been ordering comics with such assurance.

Both the US and UK press has taken time to spotlight the event, which comic fans have dreamt of for over thirty years. Recently, both **The Sun** and **The Observer** newspapers have given the crossover series coverage.

Marvel versus DC 3 (shipping from Marvel Comics) features the main events of the four-issue series:
Superman and The Hulk; Captain America and Batman; Wonder Woman and Storm; Spider-Man and Superboy and Lobo and Wolverine all battle for the honour of their respective universes.

Also in this 3rd issue is the birth of a new superhero — created jointly by DC and Marvel — one who will not conveniently disappear at the end of the potentially apocryphal series. The new hero — rumoured to be called *Access* — will play a role in both Marvel and DC Universe titles (and it is rumoured will be the catalyst for another meeting of the universes later in 1996).

Both Marvel and DC have announced that neither company will have any of their regular titles shipping on February 27th. Instead there is to be twelve special projects, produced jointly by the two publishers. These will feature amalgamations of both Marvel and DC superheroes, eg Super Soldier — a hybrid version of Superman and Captain America, in twelve one-shots, tying directly into the Main Event.

DC Comics will not be issuing the following titles during February:
The Adventures of Superman; **Batman & Robin Adventures**; **Legends of the Dark Knight**; **Fate**; **Impulse**; **Justice League Task Force**; **Legionnaires**; **The Ray** and **Steel**.

Marvel will not be releasing the following during February:
Avengers; **Doctor Strange**; **Over the Edge**; **Silver Surfer**; **Spectacular Spider-Man**; **Venom: Along Came a Spider** and the 100th issue of **Wolverine**.

Marvel versus DC 3 is a 48 page issue and retails for $3.95. It ships February 20th and is written by Ron Marz and Peter David, while pencils and inks are by Dan Jurgens, Claudio Castellini, Joe Rubinstein and Paul Neary.

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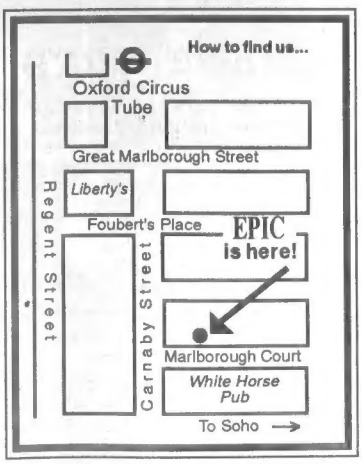

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MAJOR DIGRESSIONS

General thoughts and stuff

Peter David, writer of comics, paperbacks, film scripts and stuff, contributes a weekly column, "But I Digress" to US trade paper ***The Comic Buyer's Guide****. In addition to appearing monthly in* ***Comics International****, he also writes* ***The Incredible Hulk*** *and* ***Spider-Man 2099*** *for Marvel Comics,* ***Aquaman*** *for DC and has just released his first* ***Incredible Hulk*** *novel.*

ASSORTED bits of weirdness in my life:

* * * * * * * *

A couple of years ago I happened to run into Warp Graphics' Richard Pini at a West Coast convention. We were chatting and I asked how Wendy was.

"We're separated," he said.

I gaped at him. "I'm — terribly sorry to hear that," I said.

"Yes. She's back in New York and I'm here. We're separated by 3000 miles."

I didn't get it at first. "You mean you're just — separated geographically?"

"That's right. When the convention's over, I'm going home." And then he smiled slightly, clearly pleased with himself that he had so easily conned me.

Funny guy, that Richard.

* * * * * * * *

THE intrepid Myra and I are separated.

Space Cases, the TV series I created with Bill Mumy for Nickelodeon, has been picked up for 13 episodes and gone into production. It's scheduled to begin airing in March 1996, although that's subject to change.

Since *Space Cases* is a co-production with a Canadian outfit called Cinar, we are filming the series in beautiful Montreal.

So I've been relocated here, the production putting me up in a rented condo in downtown Montreal.

I was walking around a nearby mall in the company of Paul Boretski, who plays the heroic Commander Goddard on the series. We happened by a comics shop and went in. The guys there were chatting about Walt and Louise Simonson for some reason. I joined in the conversation, not identifying myself, but coming across as knowledgeable. And Paul, unable to resist, said to them, "Do you know who this is? This is Peter David."

So they looked me up and down appraisingly. "Well," one of them said slowly, "he could pass for Peter David —"

Paul and I looked at each other. I mouthed, He could *pass*?

The appraiser said challengingly, "If you are Peter David — what issue of **Dreadstar** was your first?"

You have to understand, I have trouble remembering my sister's birthday or which issue of **Incredible Hulk** is on the stands. The only thing I'm worse with than names is dates, issue numbers, that kind of thing. "I don't remember," I said.

"How could you not remember?" he demanded derisively.

"It was a long time ago! It was Angel Medina, maybe it was #38, I'm not sure."

Too late. The guy gave a contemptuous wave, dismissing me. Terrific. I flunked the Peter David quiz — and on the first question. If only I'd known, I'd have studied.

Of course, I could have simply pulled out my American Express card or something, but this was more challenging. The guy turned to me and said, "What's Peter David's Internet address?"

"On which service?" I asked quickly. I haven't looked at my early stuff on **Dreadstar** in ages, but, by gosh, I'm current on my computer address.

"Compuserve," he said.

I rattled it off. I couldn't believe that he knew it offhand, but it's the speed and confidence with which I delivered it that put his doubts to rest.

He shook my hand, pleased to meet me. (Or maybe not. Maybe he just thought I was delusional and he simply decided to take pity on me. Can you imagine such a thing? Having a sickness or being a liar, and *my* identity is the one aspired to? With all the people throughout history you could believe yourself to be? Talk about *pathetic*.)

Paul is later indignant on my behalf. Me, I think it's funny. Then, again, what do I know? Certainly not my first issue of **Dreadstar**.

* * * * * * * *

ABOUT 16 years ago I was working at New York University in the law school. I was working at two publications as a secretary-assistant: in the morning at a law review magazine and in the afternoon at the law-school newspaper **The Commentator**.

It was quietest during the summer. Most of the students were gone; there was perhaps a handful still around. Nevertheless, the law school and all ancillary offices remained open — which meant I still had my job. It was a great job in

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We currently have a copy of "Detective Comics" #600 celebrating the 50th anniversary of Batman from Dynamic Forces. This comic is signed by Batman creator Bob Kane and is number 1 of 600. Anyone who is interested in purchasing this comic should send their offer by post enclosing a S.A.E or a daytime telephone number where they can be contacted.

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that the phone rang perhaps once, twice a day. And that was pretty much about it.

I got a *lot* of writing done — nothing I'd especially want to have see the light of day any more, but it *was* practice.

Nevertheless, with no one to talk to and nothing to do except self-generated work, I was bored from time to time.

One day, while looking out the window, I noticed a pay phone in the street below. Don't know why I never noticed it before, but there it was.

A pay phone.

Opportunity for harmless fun.

I went out to the street, jotted down the number of the pay phone, went back to the office, and dialled it.

And waited.

I could tell from the reactions of passers-by that the phone was ringing. They would slow, look at it, look left and right, then shrug and keep going.

Didn't matter to me, I had the whole summer to wait.

As it turned out, I didn't need to wait more than two minutes.

A mailman, looking snappy in his crisp United States Postal Services uniform, was pushing one of those little mail trucks with several mail bags hanging from it. He stopped, stared at the phone, and picked it up.

"Hello?"

"Yes hello," I said, sounding slightly rushed. "Can you tell me how much it will cost to send a five-pound package to Yugoslavia?"

"Excuse me?"

I repeated my question, settling into my seat.

"Well, sir, this isn't the Post Office," he told me.

"It's not?"

"No."

"This isn't the 34th Street Post Office?"

"No it's not."

"Is this —" and I read the phone number back to him.

He looked at the phone number on the dial.

(Often, nowadays, pay phones don't have numbers on them, to prevent people calling back so that the original caller doesn't have to keep plunking money into the pay phone — as if the phone company doesn't make enough money. Think about it: Once upon a time there was such a thing as an incomplete call. You'd call and no one was home, so the phone would just ring until you hung up. Or you'd get a busy signal. Either way you wouldn't get charged. But now the percentage of incomplete calls must be staggeringly small. People have answering machines. Or call waiting. These are so common that, when no one picks up or you get a busy signal, it's actually a surprise, even an inconvenience. That being the case, the phone company must be raking it in. Volume must be through the roof. But I digress...)

So he looked at the number on the dial and said, "Yes, that's the right number."

"Well, this is the number information gave me for 34th Street Post Office. And I really need to know how much postage to put on this five-pound package for Yugoslavia."

"I'm sorry, sir, this really isn't the Post Office. It's a pay phone on Bleeker Street."

"What?"

"A pay phone on Bleeker Street."

I considered that for a moment. "You've gotta be kidding me."

"No, sir, really —"

"You guys are just having fun with me over there. OK, joke's over. I really need to know how much to send this package to Yugoslavia."

"Sir, this *really isn't the Post Office.* It's a *pay phone.*"

I paused. "Are you serious?"

"Yes."

"You're telling me this is a pay phone."

"That's right," he said, sounding relieved. He was about to finish this absurd call.

"You're telling me this is not the 34th Street Post Office."

"That is correct."

I paused, and then tossed down my trump card. "You're telling me *you don't work for the Postal Service?*" Dead silence. I held my breath. Would he lie to get out of it?

"Well" he began. I knew I had him, "well, actually — I *do* work for the Postal Service —"

"So this *is* the 34th Street Post Office!" I said triumphantly.

I think he was about to cry. To this day I'm amazed he didn't hang up. "No — no. it's not," he said in a pleading voice, "really it's not. I'm a mailman."

"A mailman."

"That's right."

"Let me get this straight," I said. "You're a mailman, making your rounds, walking down Bleeker Street, and you've stopped everything to pick up a ringing pay phone and talk to me?"

"That's right."

"Jeez!" I said in outrage. "No *wonder* it takes forever to get my mail!" And I hung up.

Have you ever seen one of those moments in a movie when someone stares at a phone receiver in their hand, long after the person on the other end has hung up?

You have no idea how weird that looks when someone does it in real life.

© Peter David, 1995

(Peter David, writer of stuff, can be written to at To Be Continued Inc., PO Box 239, Bayport, NY 11705, United States of America. He wants it known that he'd never pull such foolishness now; the last thing we need is more disgruntled postal workers.)

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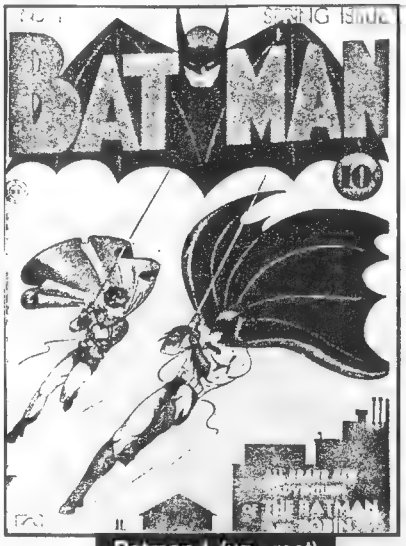

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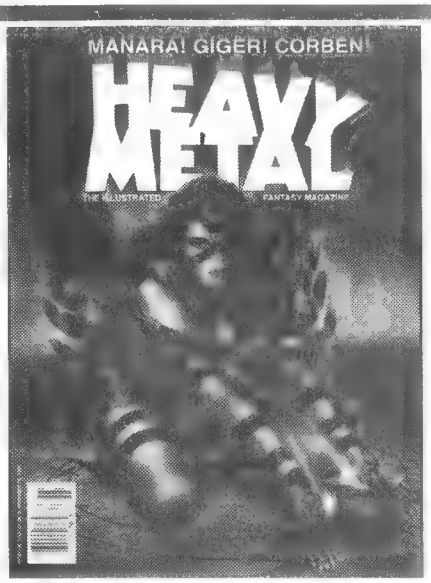

I've waxed eloquently in previous advertisements about my high regard for Kevin Eastman's Heavy Metal magazine. Whatever genre, publisher, family or style of comics you are into, you owe it to yourself to check out Heavy Metal. Please remember though that due to the overtly sexual & adult content of much of the magazine, Heavy Metal is for over 18's only. (age statement required).

H702: HEAVY METAL NOVEMBER 1995: More of the best fantasy art in the world, a real treat for the eyes. This issue spotlights H.R. Giger, before we turn the pages, to find **"The Great Undart"** in which a barbarian style rapine pillager gets his cumuppance through an intelligent sexy captive. **"Black Dekker"** by Fernando de Filipe is futuristic spaghetti crime noir adventure set in a hothouse atmosphere that sucks you into the story. Fernando's use of colour, angle & lighting is incredibly Cinematic. **"Ringside"** is a story of two boxers & a woman. View **"The Way of the Warrior"** for chainsaw blood & guts. **"Heroes of the Stars"** harks back to the EC 50's invasion stories & **"Machonismechs"** are fightin' marines of 2474. The issue is curvaceously rounded off by **"Marie Claire"** (Manara) who lets a pirate genie out of an old cabinet. **"Bit Degeneration"** depicts a drugged-out techno future, & the whole package is topped with a Richard Corben short story. 128 pages: USA $4.50 UK £3.50 Warehouse price.....£1.50

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One year ago Marvel purchased the small regional New Jersey distributor, Heroes World. The repercussions of that action have reverberated throughout the business, radically changing the distributive patterns of comics as well as some allied products.

The aftershocks are not over yet. As we move into 1996, more, and possibly greater changes are on the horizon. If you thought 1995 was interesting, 1996 looks like being radical. Whatever does happen The Comics Warehouse will be right here, enjoying the roller coaster that the comics business has become; we'll be here for you bringing you the right books at the right price 'cos we've got the right stuff.

In 1996 we invite you to check out our New Comics Service and of course you are more than welcome to sample our superbly inexpensive back issues service. As the final days of the year wind down, we'll be taking a small break ourselves. Once we are back in harness in January it'll be all systems go. This month we are restricting ourselves to a single page in Comics International and, as has been our policy during the last few months, you can take anything here and mix & match it with anything in our adverts from issues 60 (32 page), 61 (6 pages) and 62 (4 pages). Officially all those adverts are due to expire on December 31st 1995 but due to the current publishing deadlines, we are extending the life of the ads (including this one) to January 20th 1996.

So when you have a little free time over the holiday, why not wander through our recent ads and treat yourself.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Take care...

Colin & The Warehouse Crew

ORDERING INFORMATION & TERMS

- The minimum **written** order is £5.00, the minimum **telephone/faxed** order is £10.00 before the application of shipping fees. Thank you.
- BY MAIL: List your complete order together with your name, address (and daytime phone number if possible), and enclose a cheque, postal orders, money order, cash or your credit card details. Please make payments to The Comics Warehouse (only send cash by registered mail).
- BY FAX: List your complete order, name, address credit card details and phone number.
- BY PHONE: Please have your full order to hand together with your credit card details when ordering by telephone. We regret that we are unable to take telephone reservations, only orders together with credit card payments. Please note that telephone lines for orders and queries are open between 9.30 and 4.30 Monday to Friday There may possibly be personnel available at other times but we cannot guarantee it. When leaving messages on the 24 Hour line, please start with your name and telephone number so that we can contact you if a call back is needed.
- DELIVERY: Orders will be dealt with in rotation as received. Our guarantee: all orders of whatever size will be turned around within seven to fourteen working days then the couriers we use make sure your parcel gets to you safely.
- FULL REFUNDS - NO CREDIT NOTES: In the unlikely event that we are out of stock of any of your offered items, a refund cheque will be despatched. Credit card customers will be debited the exact amount of goods plus shipping.
- SHIPPING: For the flat fee of £3.00 per order Mainland UK books are shipped by courier to commercial addresses (e.g. your place of work) or by Parcel Force or similar to private homes. All parcels are consigned and will need to be signed for on receipt.
- FLAT RATE SHIPPING FEES OUTSIDE MAINLAND UK: Northern Ireland £3.50, Eire & Channel Isle £8.00, Belgium & France £9.00,Netherlands & Denmark £10.00, Germany & Luxembourg £12.00, Spain, Portugal & Italy £14.00. Other countries are shipped by International Courier on a per kilo basis. Send in your order and after picking it, we shall advise you of the shipping cost.
- MULTIPLE COPY ORDERS are supplied at our discretion only.
- UNCONDITIONAL GUARANTEE: Because we are confident that you will be delighted with our service, the quality of our books, and our pricing policies, we are happy to offer a full refund on any unsatisfactory order returned within seven days of shipping.
- CAUTION: Titles marked for mature readers often contain themes of a sexual nature and are most definitely not for minors. We must ask you to confirm you are over sixteen(Vertigo) or eighteen (more mature product) years of age in writing when ordering such items.

Credit Card Hotlines: 01621 850351 01621 859242 Fax Order Line: 01621 850862 24-hour Answerphone 01621 859243

Reboot meets X-Files?

FOLLOWING the success of the first purely computer-generated film ever made, Disney's **Toy Story**, the Brendan McCarthy designed *Reboot* series is likely to be made into a full-length feature.

McCarthy also informed **Comics International**, before flying out to Australia for Christmas, that he had just completed designs and storyboards for the second season of the computer-animated TV series *Reboot*.

He also revealed exclusively that he has just finished working on a *Reboot/X-Files Special*, a TV surprise featuring the cast of *The X-Files* and the full cooperation of *X-Files* creator Chris Carter.

The special was made in Vancouver where both *Reboot* and *X-Files* are filmed.

Brendan also revealed that he has just finished co-creating the follow-up project after *Reboot*. This new SF series is aimed at the prime-time TV market and will again utilise computer graphics. McCarthy said he thinks the new project will be much bigger than *Reboot* and will hopefully appeal to the *Star Trek* and *X-Files* market.

Reboot was a major success for ITV when shown earlier this year and the new series is planned for the spring.

McCarthy also said that he had been approached and asked if he would like to work on the new *X-Men* film.

Famous for designing comics characters such as **Rogan Gosh**, **Freak Wave** and the current **Shade, the Changing Man**, McCarthy also revealed that he has withdrawn his new comicbook series, **Z-Men**, from its current would-be publisher and is now talking to a rival publisher about production.

The **Z-Men** problems arose because of "creative differences" and McCarthy expects that his new publisher will have the project out by mid-1996.

Just to prove that Brendan McCarthy is possibly one of the busiest men in the industry at present, look out for his name on the credits of two films due out in the UK at Christmas. Both *Pinnochio* and *Loch Ness* are films Brendan has worked on this year.

Titan's Preacher

TITAN Books is issuing a UK version of **Preacher: Gone to Texas**, a compilation of the first four issues of Vertigo's critically-acclaimed **Preacher** series.

Written by Garth Ennis and drawn by Steve Dillon, **Preacher: Gone to Texas** retails for £9.99 and is on sale in February.

IN BRIEF

Watson's winner

AMAZE Ink's popular **Skeleton Key** series could soon become an animated TV series. The comic's British creator Andi Watson has said that Sunbow Entertainment, makers of *The Tick*, has expressed interest in developing it into a TV cartoon series in 1996.

The monthly **Skeleton Key**'s current *La Ultima Movidd* storyline finishes with issue 6 and is followed by a year-long epic entitled *The Celestial Calender*. **Skeleton Key** retails for $2.95 from specialist comics shops.

Double Equinoxe

THE second issue of Lee Davis's new anthology comic **Equinoxe** is due out at Christmas. Davis said that the launch of his new title at UKCAC was successful, despite being very low-key.

The 28-page quarterly features a variety of strips from new creators and retails for £2.00 from the publisher: Peter Jaques, 21 The Oaklands, Droitwich Spa, Worcs.

Classic Trek bible

THIS month, Titan Books is re-releasing an updated A-Z guide to the classic *Star Trek* TV series.

Priced £14.99, **Star Trek Concordance** is compiled by Bjo Trimble, one of the world's leading *Star Trek* authorities and it features over 300 pages of facts, details, trivia and photos.

Print exclusive

A&A PRINTS is the newly appointed sole distributor in the UK for the 1000 Editions range of Manga and Looney Tunes prints. They also have the rights to distribute both Bryan Talbot's **One Bad Rat** and Michael Allred's **Madman** prints. For further information contact A. Hoare on 01239 621004.

Strangehaven hit

GARY Spencer Millidge has had considerable success with his new project, **Strangehaven**.

His comic recently had an eight-page preview in Dave Sim's **Cerebus** and he was commissioned by Caliber Press to do an all-new eight-pager for their award-winning title, **Negative Burn**. The strip will appear in issue 24 and not 26 as announced by its distributors.

The next **Strangehaven**, #4, will be on sale in March.

OVER 20 YEARS OF MARTS AND MARKETPLACES

COMICBOOK MARKETPLACE

1996 SUNDAY JANUARY 7

CAMDEN CENTRE BIDBOROUGH ST LONDON WC1

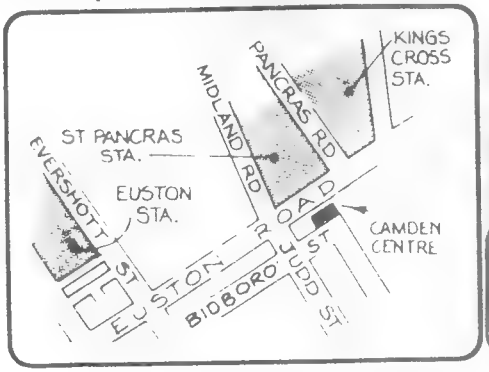
The Comicbook Marketplace is held five times a year at the Camden Centre and is just a few minutes walk from Kings Cross, St. Pancras and Euston stations.

DOORS OPEN MID-DAY
ADMISSION FREE

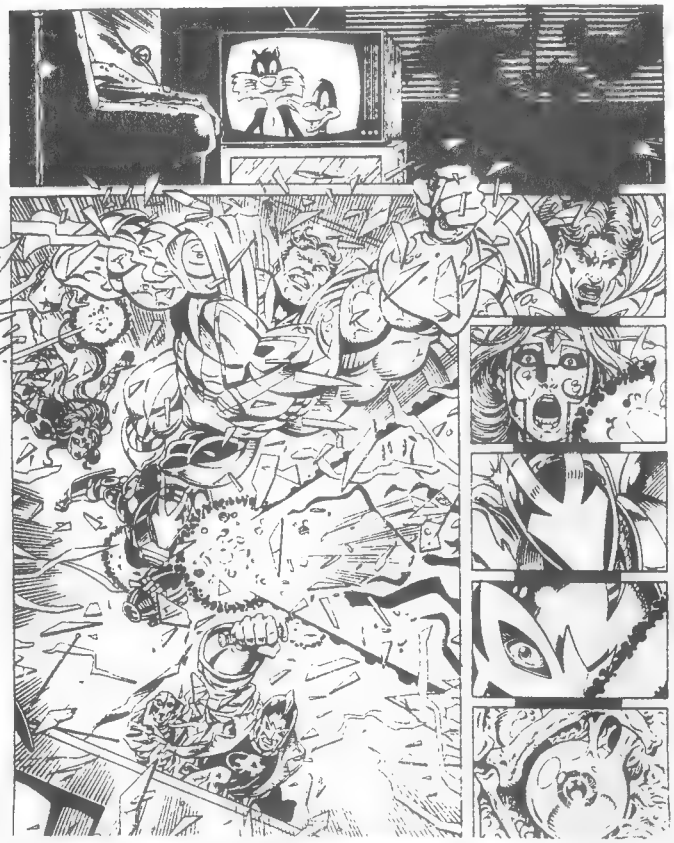
There are more than ninety tables wiyh over 200,000 comicbooks, magazines and trading cards on sale, including S.F., fantasy, film and T.V. related items, from Britain's top dealers.

Sandwiches, snacks, and hot and cold drinks are available throughout the day from the refreashment area located in the dealers room.

How to get there:
Bus: 10, 17, 30, 45, 46, 63, 73, 91, 214, 259 or 359 to Kings Cross or Camden Town Hall.
Underground: Circle, Metropolitan, Piccadilly or Victoria Line to Kings Cross.



COMICBOOK MARKETPLACE DATES FOR 1996:
JANUARY 7TH, APRIL 21ST, JUNE 9TH, AUGUST 25TH, NOVEMBER 17TH.



Royle adds Prime to portfolio

BRITISH artist John Royle is facing a meteoric rise in his popularity since becoming a freelancer for Marvel UK in the early Nineties.

Royle has just been assigned as permanent penciller on the Marvel/Malibu **Prime** series — he starts with issue 3.

The Manchester-based artist's credits have included issues of **Excalibur**, **Wolverine** and Malibu's **Ultraforce** and most recently the currently high-profile **Phoenix Resurrection**, which crosses into the X-Men family, all with British writer Ian Edgington.

Titan launches UK Mask comic

TITAN Magazines, the periodical publishing arm of Titan Books, plans to attack the newsstand market with three further colour magazines, in addition to the successful **Star Trek Monthly**, *writes Alan Woolcombe.*

The Mask is a 32-page monthly title aimed at younger readers and based around the animated TV series to be shown in January. The new title launches on February 22 and will contain a mixture of reprinted American strips and traditional British features (articles, puzzles, text stories, mask on cover) and will retail for 99p, rising to £1.20 from the second issue.

Aimed at an older readership, **The Official Star Wars Magazine** will appear on March 14, and will initially appear as a bi-monthly. Boasting a mix of interviews, features and comic strips, the 68-page magazine will cover all aspects of George Lucas's trilogy. Cover price has been provisionally set at £3.00.

Also from Titan is **Babylon 5**, a one-off, 68-page primer on Channel 4's SF series and a companion title to Titan's other souvenir one-shot magazines. Further details have yet to be announced.

January distributed DC Comics

THE following 39 January cover-dated DC comics *will* be distributed to UK newsagents:

DC Universe titles: **Action Comics; Adventures of Superman; Aquaman; Azrael** (two issues shipping); **Batman; Batman and Robin Adventures; Batman: Shadow of the Bat; Legends of the Dark Knight; Catwoman** (two issues shipping); **Detective Comics; Firebrand; Flash; Green Lantern; Impulse; Lobo; Man-Bat; Power of Shazam; Robin** (two issues shipping); **Sovereign Seven; The Spectre; Starman; Superboy; Superman: Man of Steel; Superman; Superman: Man of Tomorrow; Wonder Woman.**

Vertigo titles: **Books of Magic; Hellblazer; Invisibles; Preacher; The Sandman; Sandman Mystery Theatre; Seekers: Into the Mystery; Shade the Changing Man; Swamp Thing; Vamps: Hollywood & Vein.**

NB: All other DC titles are available from specialist comics shops.

Competition winners

Comics International 61 ran a Star Wars telephone cards competition, with £180 worth of prizes for three winners provided by P&J Promotions. The response was outstanding, showing comic fans' diverse tastes, with a response level third to the earlier **Metropol & Judge Dredd** competitions.

The winners are: *Richard Earle of Stockton, Cleveland; Gary Wilkes of Dartford, Kent* and *C. D. Prichard of Laindon, Essex.*

Crumb fund raising continues

IN the continuing fund-raising appeal for Knockabout Comics' court case, UK Comic Art Convention co-organiser Frank Plowright did a successful 2,000ft jump on Sunday, December 10th outside Glasgow.

Aided by a parachute for most of the drop, Frank raised almost £500 through pledges from friends and guests from UKCAC '95. Such was Frank's dedication that, upon being told he was too heavy to jump at 15 stone, he went through a rigorous session of gym exercises to reduce his weight to 14½ stone.

Not wanting to be outdone by prior campaigning jumpers Paul Hudson and Dez Skinn, Frank went back for a second time, jumped, only to land heavy and slightly hurt his ankles.

The parachute jumps have all been done to raise money to help Knockabout Comics defend itself in court against HM Customs & Excise, who seized copies of the Robert Crumb book, **My Trouble with Women.**

Should Knockabout not defend its case — over two allegedly pornographic panels — not only will all the copies be destroyed, but a precedent will be set which could result in an increase in censorship of comics brought into Britain.

Readers wishing to contribute to Knockabout's appeal can send donations (£5, £10 or £20 being requested sums) to the campaigning publisher at: Knockabout Comics, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ. Cheques should be made payable to solicitors *Nash & Dowell.*

MTV supports art exhibition

FOR its brochure to celebrate The MTV Europe Music Awards 1995, the company commissioned 24 European comic artists to create new, self-contained stories on the theme of *Random Acts of Kindness.*

In addition, each contributing artist has pencilled one panel to a single story by Alan Moore, *Outbreaks of Violets* — a cautionary tale about the terrors of being nice to one another.

The brochure is edited by **Deadline's** Frank Wynne and features art from creators including Mike McMahon, Jamie Hewlett, Ed Pinsent, Max, Christian Gorny and John Burns.

All of the original comic artwork to the brochure will be on display at The National Museum of Cartoon Art until January 10.

MTV has donated a number of the brochures to the museum and all proceeds from the sales will go to the Cartoon Art Trust.

Sonic wins licensing award

FLEETWAY Editions Ltd, publishers of **Sonic The Comic**, one of Britain's most successful action/adventure comics, is the recipient of computer console giants Sega's prestigious Licensee of the Year Award. The award was presented to **Sonic The Comic's** managing editor Richard Burton, whose editorial and design team was also present for the ceremony. Burton said, "This proves comics are still a force in children's entertainment."

Sonic The Comic was first published in May 1993, and recently underwent a major redesign. Fleetway promises to continue to push the title in new directions during 1996.

***SMUT the Alternative Comic** is being relaunched with a £100,000+ advertising campaign to herald the arrival of risque comedian Roy Chubby Brown to his own lead strip in the comic. Brown is arguably Britain's most popular adult comedian and has been riding high in the record and video charts with his most recent releases Living Next Door to Alice and Clitoris Allsorts. Brown's strip, The Adventures of Chubby Brown, will feature alongside regulars Judge Fred, Dick Ed, Fat Idle Bastard and Farmer Piles. Priced £1.25, **Smut** is published by ARF Cartoons and is distributed by Portman Distribution.*

Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year

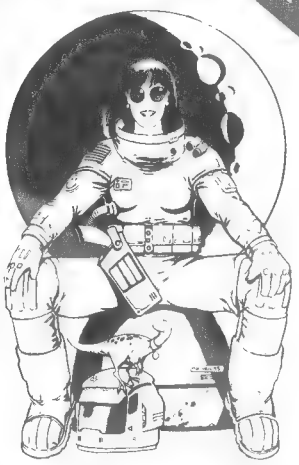
to

All Our Customers, Old and New

A-1
books & comics

EARTH TWO COMICS

SCOTLAND'S ONLY 50p BACK-ISSUE SHOP



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GLASGOW COMIC MARTS

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JANUARY 6th
FEBRUARY 3rd
MARCH 2nd

ARGYLE STREET PRECINCT
GLASGOW (Next to Dolcis)

DEALERS CONTACT: 0141 552 6692

Now 1st Saturday of Every Month

ADVANCE LISTINGS: UK

With the majority of UK-produced comics, trade paperbacks and graphic novels not readily available, the following listing of material to be published next month gives readers the opportunity to order specific titles through newsagents, bookshops or specialist outlets. As such, only titles nationally distributed through federated news outlets are included. All dates, prices and information are assumed to be accurate as provided by publishers. Late shipping, cancellations and changes in content will be detailed in future issues of ***Comics International****.*

Compiled by Kerry-Ann Hurley

Key to abbreviations used:

1 & 2 + 3	=	*Writer & penciller + inker*
wkly	=	*weekly frequency*
fthly	=	*fortnightly frequency*
mthly	=	*monthly frequency*
o/s	=	*oversized, larger than A4*
dgst	=	*small, approx A5 sized*
sqbd	=	*perfect bound; squared spine; without staples*
b&w	=	*black & white contents*
clr	=	*full colour contents*
pc	=	*part-colour contents*
gn	=	*graphic novel*
thbk	=	*trade hardback edition*
tpbk	=	*trade paperback, squarebound, comic size*
Xpgs	=	*number of interior pages*
Mature	=	*recommended for mature readers, may contain nudity, sex and/or extreme violence.*

TITLES ON SALE: JANUARY

ARF CARTOONS

Smut: The Alternative Comic 64 (mthly; various) Adult humour comic strips now featuring the adventures of Roy Chubby Brown. Also, a chance to win Chubby Brown videos and CDs. Mature. 40pgs pc £1.25

ARGO COMICS

NEW **Star Blazers 0** (Tim Eldred) Based on the long-running Japanese animated video series: The origin of the Space Cruiser Yamato unfolds in this oneshot comic magazine. Plus a special Yamato information section giving details of the ship's workings. 32pgs clr . . . . . TBA

BOXTREE BOOKS

Adventures of Cyclops & Phoenix (tpbk; Lobdell & Ha + Vey) From the US mini-series. On their honeymoon, Cyclops and Phoenix are transported into the future. There they get a chance to raise the child that they had given up long ago. In doing so, they accidentally instigate a major turning point which will effect the present-day X-Men forever when the now-adult child returns to the present. 96pgs clr £8.99

Star Wars: Empire's End (tpbk; Veitch & Kennedy) Following the *Dark Empire II* compilation, this two-issue collection resolves all the storylines with a surprise ending. 64pgs clr £6.99

Star Wars: Heir to the Empire (tpbk; Baron & Vatine + Blanchard) Collecting the Dark Horse mini-series. Five years after *Return of the Jedi*, Leia and Han are married and have shouldered the heavy burden of ruling the New Republic. But the Empire is not completely destroyed and seeks revenge. clr £9.99

Uncanny X-Men: X-Ecutions 2 (tpbk; various) From the Marvel crossover storyline. The X-Men and Starjammers attack the flagship of the Imperial Fleet. But the fleet's commander, Deathbird, will not be taken down without a fight. clr £8.99

DC THOMSON

Beano 2789-2793 (wkly; various) Humour comic strips including regulars: Dennis the Menace & Gnasher and Minnie the Minx. 24pgs clr £0.38

Beano Comic Library Monthly 331-332 (2 per mth; dgst; various) Extra-long comic stories featuring the most popular **Beano** characters. 68pgs pc £0.50

Beano Superstars 49 (mthly; various) One complete full-length humour strip in each issue. 48pgs clr £1.10

Bunty 1981-1984 (wkly; various) Picture and photo stories plus features for girls. 32pgs pc £0.50

Bunty Picture Library 410-411 (2 per mth; dgst; various) One full-length comic strip per issue. 68pgs b&w £0.50

Commando Action & Adventure Stories 2915-2922 (8 per mth; dgst; various) War strips set mostly in World War II. 68pgs b&w £0.50

Dandy 2823-2826 (wkly; various) Humour anthology including regulars: Desperate Dan and Korky the Cat. 24pgs clr £0.38

Dandy Comic Library Monthly 307-308 (2 per mth; various) Extra long comic stories of the favourite **Dandy** characters. 68pgs pc £0.50

Football Picture Story Monthly 231-232 (2 per mth; various) Comic strip soccer stories. 68pgs pc £0.50

Mandy & Judy 241-244 (wkly; various) Comic strip stories plus features and pet pin-ups for girls. 32pgs pc £0.50

Mandy & Judy Picture Library 232-233 (2 per mth; dgst; various) One full-length comic story per issue. 68pg b&w £0.50

FELDON PRODUCTIONS

Sweet FA 11 (mthly, various) Football humour comic strips and spoof newspaper-style articles. Mature. 52pgs pc £0.99

FLEETWAY EDITIONS

Bugs Bunny 46 (mthly; various) Humour reprint with Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck plus other Warner Bros characters. 32pgs clr £1.20

Buster 27-28 (ftnly; various) Humour comic featuring Buster, Chalky and other regulars. 32pgs clr £0.80

BVC 25-26 (ftnly; various) Reprint compilation from Fleetway humour titles. 68pgs b&w £1.00

Classic 2000AD 6 (now bi-mthly; Gibbons & Simpson) Reprinting the complete story by Dave Gibbons and Will Simpson, *Rogue Trooper: War Machine*. Free pull-out Venus Blue Jeans poster by Jason Brashill. 68pgs clr . . . . . price increase £2.00

Classic Judge Dredd 7 (mthly; Grant & Wagner + various) Judge Dredd stories reprinted in chronological order. This month features: *Riders on the Storm* (Wagner + Grant & B. McCarthy) and *The Law According to Dredd* (Wagner + Grant & O'Neil). Cover by Peter Doherty. 68pgs clr £1.50

Flintstones 22 (mthly; various) Humour comic with Fred Flintstone and his stone age friends. Plus the space age family the Jetsons. 32pgs clr . . . £0.95

CANCELLED **Garfield Monthly**

Judge Dredd: Lawman of the Future 14 (ftnly; various) Starring Judge Dredd in: *Survival* (Morrison & Longcroft) *Sponts a Go-Go* (Standley & Peart + Langridge) and *Dragon's Liar* (Morrison & Ronald). Cover: Dylan Teague. Free two-for-one Lazerquest voucher. 36pgs. clr . . . . . price increase £1.10

Judge Dredd: Lawman of the Future 15 (ftnly; various) Featuring Dredd stories: *Bomb Man* (Kitching & Teague), *Cybernetic Jungle* (Morrison & Senior) and part two of *Dragon's Liar* (Morrison & Ronald). Cover: Dylan Teague. Free Judge Dredd stickers. 36pgs clr £1.10

Judge Dredd Megazine Vol 3 #14 (now mthly; various) Now with a double helping of Dredd in: *Tickers* (Barnes & Gavin) and *The Shooting* (Neal & Wigmore), plus a complete Anderson story *The Protest* (Grant & Ranson) and the first part of *Shimura: Dragon Fire* (Morrison & Fraser). Cover: Ashley Wood. Free A2 wrap-around poster by Jason Brashill featuring Shimura, Anderson and Judge Dredd. 52pgs clr . . . . . price increase £2.00

Mickey & Friends 53-56 (wkly; various) Comic strips featuring Disney characters: Mickey Mouse; Goofy; Uncle Scrooge; Huey, Dewey & Louie. 32pgs clr. £0.80

Sonic the Comic 69-70 (ftnly; various) Features, game reviews and games related comic strips. 36pgs clr £1.20

Tom & Jerry 23 (mthly; various) Comic strip humour from the renowned cat and mouse duo. 44pgs clr £1.00

2000AD 974-977 (wkly; various) This month features the final episode of *PARAsites* (Eyles & Hadley) with Vector 13 stories: *Thrill Kill* (Williamson & Burns) and *Oath of Office* (Rennie & Marshall). Plus continuations of: *The Pit* (Wagner & Ezquerra), *Kid Cyborg* (Long & McCarthy) and *Flesh* (Abnett & Erskine). New stories this month are: *Venus Blue Jeans: Frag Shell* (Abnett & Coleby + Hart) and a horror story *Darkness Visible* (Abadzis & Ridgway + Hart). Issue 975 has a free Dredd movie video sleeve. 44pgs clr £1.00

JOHN BROWN PUBLICATIONS

Viz 76 (bi-monthly; various) Adult humour featuring Biffa Bacon, Fat Slags, Sid the Sexist, Cockney Wanker and all the other regulars. Mature. 52pgs pc £1.25

KNOCKABOUT COMICS

Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers 12 (Shelton) New edition of Gilbert Shelton's classic seventies underground humour strips. Mature. 32pgs b&w £1.99

NEW **Surfing the Conscious Nets** (Timothy Leary) Graphic novel of an e-mail communication between Leary, Richard Alpert, Robert Williams and Susan Sheridan. 122pgs clr £12.99

LEAF PUBLISHING

Thunderbirds Are Go! 14 (3 wkly; various) Reprint strips of Anderson creations: Thunderbirds, Captain Scarlet, Stingray and Fireball XL5. 32pgs clr . £1.20

MAI COMICS

Spit 37 (mthly; various) Adult humour comic strips featuring Teenage Mum, Whitley Baywatch, Ugly Dudley, The Twats Nextdoor and others. Mature. 52pgs pc £1.25

MANGA PUBLISHING

Crying Freeman: Portrait of a Killer Vol 2 (tpbk; Koike & Ikegami) Rescheduled from November. Freeman travels to Hong Kong to undergo a terrifying initiation into the cult of assassins known as the 108 Dragons. Will he embrace his bloody heritage or avoid it by taking his own life? Mature. 232pgs b&w £7.99

Dirty Pair: Dangerous Acquaintances (tpbk; Smith & Warren) Rescheduled from November. The Dirty Pair take a well-deserved holiday, but their plans for a week of sun, sea and other pleasures get rudely interrupted by a blast from the past. 136pgs b&w £7.99

Manga Mania 31 (mthly; various) New version of Masamune Shirow's *Ghost in the Shell* debuts, adapting the Manga movie release. Plus latest chapters of *Akira* (Otamo) and *Striker* (Tajashige & Minagawa) and round-up of anime and manga news. 132pgs pc £2.50

Mortal Kombat 6 (mthly; various) The final part of Malibu Comics' story, *Blood and Thunder*. Plus features, tips and background. 36pgs clr .. £0.95
Space Precinct 5 (ftnly; various) Danger lurks on an archaeological dig in outer space in a new story called *True Believers* (Jowett & Manley), plus *Cruise Control* by Paul (**Kane**) Grist & Colin MacNeil. Cover by Colin MacNeil. 36pgs clr £1.25
Space Precinct 6 (ftnly; various) The second part of *True Believers* (Jowett & Manley) and the first in a two-part story: *On the Beat* (Millar & Macintosh). With the regular features, interviews and cut-away posters. 36pgs clr £1.25
Streetfighter II #16 (mthly, various) The showdown between M Bison and Ryu in the final chapter of the comic book adaptation of Manga's *Streetfighter II: The Movie*. 36pgs clr £0.95
Tank Girl 8 (mthly; various) The chaotic conclusion to *Apocalypse* (Grant & Pritchard + Gascoigne). Plus features and back-up strips starring Booga. Final issue. 68pgs clr £2.50
X-Files 9 (mthly; various) Reprinting the Topps comic strips. The conclusion of *Silent Cities of the Mind* (Petrucha & Adlard), in which Mulder and Scully face a monster who feeds on human flesh. Also exclusive features, news, interviews and programme guide. 36pgs clr £1.25

MARVEL (UK)

Astonishing Spider-Man 4 (4-wkly; various) Reprint collection of three Marvel US Spider-Man titles. 72pgs clr £1.99
Beavis and Butt-Head 20 (mthly; various) Comic strips featuring the cult MTV characters. 32pgs clr ..... price increase £1.20
Casper The Friendly Ghost 6 (4-wkly; various) Comic strips of the adventures of Casper. 36pgs clr £0.99
Doctor Who Magazine 234 (mthly; various) Features and news plus a new comic strip. 52pgs pc .. price increase £2.95
Essential X-Men 4 (4-wkly; various) Anthology reprinting stories from US X-Men titles: **Uncanny X-Men**, **Wolverine**, **Bishop** and **Giant Size X-Men**, plus features. 72pgs clr .. £1.99
Power Rangers 16 & 17 (ftnly; various) Comic strip adventures and features based on the popular Sky TV series. 32pgs clr £0.99
Spectacular Spider-Man 5 (4-wkly; various) Reprint of a full issue of a Marvel US Spider-Man title. 32pgs clr £0.99
CANCELLED **VR Troopers** (4-wkly)
X-Men 34-35 (ftnly; various) US reprint tie-in with the animated BBC series. 32pgs clr ... £0.90

THE REDAN COMPANY

I Love to Read Batman 7 (mthly; various) Comic strips featuring Batman, Robin and other DC superheroes. Also including pull out posters, hero files and an eight page activities section. 32pgs clr £1.10

SAVOY BOOKS

Reverbstorm 5 (Britton & Coulthart) Subversive anthology featuring Lord Horror and mutant twins Meng and Ecker. Mature. 56pgs b&w £3.50

TITAN BOOKS

Batman: The Last Arkham (tpbk; Grant & Breyfogle) Rescheduled from October. Reprints **Batman: Shadow of the Bat** #1-4. Batman encounters Jeremiah Arkham, the nephew of the mad Amadeus Arkham. The family insanity may be hereditary and Batman is once again caught up in the Arkham madness. 96pgs clr £8.99
Martha Washington Goes to War (tpbk; Millar & Gibbons) Reprinting the second Dark Horse mini-series of the futuristic female soldier Martha Washington created by Frank Millar and Dave Gibbons. 144pgs clr ... £10.99
Sin City: The Big Fat Kill (thbk; Frank Millar) Rescheduled from December. A hardcover collection of the third Sin City mini-series. The mob are looking to regain control of the Old Town from the resident streetwalking dames. Mature. 144pgs b&w .. £16.99
Star Trek Monthly #12 (mthly, various) This month focuses on *Deep Space Nine* as its first season reaches a climax. Including interviews with Rene Aberjonois and Terry Farrell, plus the regular features and news and a guide to all the *Star Trek* movies. 68pgs clr £2.95
Star Trek: Revisitations (tpbk; Weinstein & Purcell + Wingham) The original Star Trek characters Kirk, Spock, McCoy, Scotty and the Enterprise crew are visited by the mysterious time-traveller Gary Seven, and the outrageous Harry Mudd in two new adventures by Howard Weinstein: *The Return of Harry Mudd* and *The Peacekeeper*. clr £12.99
Superman: Eradication (tpbk; Jurgens & various) Reprint collection of **Adventures of Superman** #460, 464-465, **Superman** 41-42 and **Action Comics** 651. Superman's final struggle with his Kryptonian heritage, providing the origin of the current incarnation of the Eradicator. 160pgs clr .. £8.99
The Tale of One Bad Rat (tpbk; Talbot) Collecting the award-winning Dark Horse mini-series by Brian Talbot. Helen Potter has run away from home and her violent, sexually abusive father in the North, to arrive penniless in London, with only a pet rat for company. clr £9.99
Vamps (tpbk; Lee & Simpson) Rescheduled from November. Meet Howler, Screech, Whip-snake, Skeeter and Mink — five dangerously alluring female vampires thundering down America's highways on Harleys and high octane. But Howler, their leader, harbours a dark secret that may prove to be their downfall. 144pgs clr ... £6.99

ZIT COMICS

Zit 63 (mthly; various) Adult humour comic strips including The Sex Files, Billy No Mates, Beaver and Bumhead, The Morons plus others. Mature. 48pgs pc .. price increase £1.40

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MEDIAFILE

Associate editor Sarah Bolesworth looks at recent media coverage of comics and related product

Tokyo tribes

IF COMICS are ever to be accepted by the British arts establishment (God forbid), freelance writer Andrew Smith — not a comics specialist — will be one at least on whom to pin the blame.

In an excellent three-page Tokyo Fantastic Film Festival report in the **Observer Life** magazine (19.11.95), Smith achieved a fine balancing act: a broad-brush approach to manga and anime designed to appeal across gender, interest and age barriers.

Firmly grasping the nettle of cultural credibility, Smith touched on the subject of high versus low art, quoting Katsuhiro (*Akira*) Otomo's conviction that "in Japanese society there is no divide between what is perceived to be high and low culture, so manga may be taken more seriously than it is in the West".

(However, Katsuhiro Otomo's feelings are not in accord with Japanese-American Karl Taro Greenfeld's. In his definitive book on contemporary Japan, **Speed Tribes**, Greenfeld argues that the image of Japan's homogenous, unified social attitudes is dangerously out of date.)

Assuming that readers would be conversant with the global spread of anime, at least by hearing about *Akira*, Smith (actually his real name) made only a passing reference to "industry gossip" about DC using manga experts to brainstorm the revamping of several of its core characters.

Smith chose instead to highlight the growing popularity of women creators and consumers in the manga and anime market.

"At least 70 percent of the people rifling the shelves of the Comicstation in Shibuya, a manga superstore [in Tokyo], are female. They stagger to the checkouts with arms full, producing credit cards to pay bills of up to £80 ...

"Rumiko Takahashi is one of the richest and most revered of all the manga artists," says Smith. "She is a multi-millionaire with 50 million copies of her books in print." Eat your heart out, Todd McFarlane.

Simply okatu

But one of Andrew Smith's most revealing observations was on the fans waiting to get into Mamoru Oshii's film adaptation of Shirow's **Ghost in the Shell** (showing in the UK from 8 December).

"The otaku [fanboys] have their own Oriental skate punk-style uniform: spotless canvas or suede trainers worn with sparkling white socks; navy or beige cotton trousers or crisply tailored shorts; check shirts or T-shirts and logo-less blouson jackets."

You don't see many like that at the UK Comic Art Convention, do you? Come on, you Brits, where's your sense of style?

Educating Dennis

The Beano is a would-be contender in the new wave of popular culture washing through the dusty corridors of academe.

Jo Ashton-Jones argued in a **Guardian Education** feature (24.11.95) that **The Beano** should join Australian TV soap *Neighbours*, popular music, and advertising on the English degree courses of such venerable institutions as Oxford University.

Oxford's somewhat tardy acceptance of popular entertainment as a valid subject for study has sparked another round in the high/low culture debate, nowhere more vigorously argued than among the English.

But the only real difference between *Coronation Street* and Dickens is the means and reach of distribution. If Dickens *had* had access to TV, you can bet he would have been a soap screenwriter — many of his works were published in episodic form and achieved record sales levels for the periodicals of that time. By definition he *was* a popular writer — as was Shakespeare.

Beyond all the well-rehearsed arguments lies a basic truth: culture is about the human experience, and knows no boundaries of class, money or nation. If Dennis the Menace *is* taken into Oxford's curriculum, that bit of iconoclastic human experience (even by proxy) won't do graduates any harm when it comes to dealing with the real world.

Always the Spectator ...

Comics fan Michael Harrington must have been sick when he saw how **The Spectator**, that bastion of establishment values, had presented his feature on the longevity of superheroes (4.11.95).

Harrington had written a well-researched piece for the political periodical in which he traced the origins and changing roles of superheroes (including Wonder Woman) in contemporary America.

He came up with some interesting stuff: "Superman in the mid-'30s exhibited a political colour that reflected American isolationist sentiment, as well as the liberal idealism of Roosevelt's New Deal"; and "readers could be forgiven for assuming that Superman was in fact an advanced form of super social worker".

Talking about how Superman's role had at times assumed almost Christ-like dimensions, he noted that in the *Death of Superman* storyline: "Some time after Superman's death people start to report seeing him. Eventually, some friends of his break into his tomb. They find it empty."

Wonder Woman was, said Harrington, an even more interesting example of superheroes being supremely flexible icons for modern America. "She was created [in 1941] by a psychologist named William Moulton Marston, author of several academic textbooks and inventor of the lie detector ...

"Speaking of the predominantly male readership, he [Marston] said: Give them an alluring woman stronger than themselves to submit to and they'll be proud to become her willing slaves!" Shades of Thatcherism there, and still an active philosophy in US comics publishing.

All this, then, and what does **The Spectator** use as a headline for Harrington? You've guessed it: "It's a bird, it's a plane, it's ..."

Let's hope Harrington got a better deal on payment.

Knockabout trials

Robert Crumb's London-based publishers, Knockabout, told **Comics International** this month that lost revenue due to the action of HM Customs over the past year amounted to over £30,000.

Given that the film biography of Robert Crumb was distributed during the same period, sales on **My Troubles with Women** obviously suffered the worst losses.

Knockabout's publisher Tony Bennett told **Comics International**, "We are informed that HM Customs will no longer give rulings based on samples before the titles are imported in bulk.

"This almost seems to be some form of entrapment, whereby anyone importing new comics or books has to risk their seizure at point of entry."

Knockabout is appealing for donations to help fund its legal costs. "This costs a lot for a company of our size and makes our future uncertain," said Bennett. "Perhaps our closure would be the result that would please HM Customs most. Although it would be foolish to believe that we are the only small publisher that would fight against censorship."

The implications of such a legal battle for the publishing industry as a whole are grave. Despite Knockabout's efforts, the issue of censorship has not been taken up as a campaign by the wider publishing community.

Discouragingly enough, even when the integrity of the news media was brought into question by the draconian defamation laws of the late Eighties, publishers had little to say in their own defence. In sum, the chances of a wider anti-censorship campaign arising as a result of HM Customs' activities look slim. Until the media realises how much freedom of expression it has already lost, the real cost of censorship will be buried in internecine circulation wars. The shameful irony is that it takes a fringe publisher like Knockabout to address censorship, rather than the industry's monied powerhouses.

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FRAME TO FRAME

The Edge of Forever's Mike Conroy overviews the film and television industry's on-off love affair with comics characters

Coming Attractions

Many magazines carry listings of genre movies currently at some stage of production. However, quite often they appear to include speculative entries. Our listing, while not as all-encompassing as those of some other magazines, details only those movies that we have been able to confirm from more than one source. As times goes by we will investigate those missing movies and include them only when we are certain of our facts.

It is worth remembering that many producers take up options on comic book characters and/or concepts but only a small percentage ever actually make it into production and many of those that do take years to reach the screen. For example, Judge Dredd's journey to the screen took 15 years!

NEW **indicates a new entry from last issue**

IN PRODUCTION

THE ADVENTURES OF BATMAN AND ROBIN - Executive Producers: Jean MacCurdy & Tom Ruegger; Producers: Alan Burnett, Eric Radomski, Bruce Timm & Paul Dini; Casting: Andrea Romano. Warner Bros Animation.

BARB WIRE - Based on the Dark Horse character. Cast: Pamela Anderson, Temuera Morrison, Jack Noseworthy & Victoria Rowell; Executive Producer: Steve Golin; Producers: Mike Richardson, Todd Moyer & Brad Wyman; Director: Adam Rifkin; Screenplay: Chuck Pfarrar & Adam Rifkin. Polygram Filmed Entertainment/Propaganda Films/Dark Horse Entertainment. Shooting in Los Angeles started 23rd May 1995.

FANTASTIC FOUR- animated series starring Marvel's first super-team. Executive Producers: Avi Arad, Stan Lee & Rick Ungar; Supervising Producer: Tom Tataranowicz; Producer: Larry Houston; Editors: Cydne Clark, Steve Granat & Glenn Leopold. Marvel Films Animation

FIST OF THE NORTHSTAR - Based on the manga series by Buronson & Tetsuo Hara; already adapted into an anime movie. Director: Tony Randal; Cast: Gary Daniels, Costas Mandylor, Chris Penn, Isako Washio & Melvyn van Peebles. Zeta Entertainment.

NEW *GENERATION X* - Live action television film by MT2 Services Productions in association with Marvel Films. Director: Jack Sholder; Cast: Finola Hughes, Jeremy Ratchford, Matt Frewer, Augustin Rodriguez, Bumper Robinson. Screenplay: Eric Blakeney. Producer: David Roessel. Executive Producers: Stan Lee, Avi Arad, Bruce Sallan and Eric Blakeney.

G.I. JOE: EXTREME - It's always been a toy, became an animated series and a long-running comic (from Marvel) now it's back as an animated series and a new comic (this time from Dark Horse)! Executive Producers: C.J. Kettler, Joe Bacal, Tom Griffin & Jean Chalopin; Writer: Jean Chalapin; Story Editor: Buzz Dixon; Sunbow Productions Inc in association with Creativite Et Developpement

IRON MAN - An animated series featuring Marvel's armoured avenger. Executive Producers: Avi Arad, Stan Lee & Rick Ungar; Supervising Producer: Tom Tataranowicz; Producer: Yi-Chih Chen; Editors: Greg Johnson, Eric Lewald, Julia Lewald & Dean Stefan. Marvel Films Animation

LOIS & CLARK: THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN - Executive Producer: Robert Singer; Co-executive Producers: Eugenie Ross-Leming & Brad Buckner; Supervising Producers: John McNamara & Chris Ruppenthal; Producers: Jimmy Simons & Phil Sgriccia; Co-Producers: Grant Rosenberg, Jim Michaels & Chris Long; Casting: Barbara Miller & Lorna Johnson. Warner Bros Television in association with December 3rd Productions

MAD TV - TV series based around the humour magazine. Executive Producers: Quincy Jones, David Salzman, W. Fax Bahr, Adam Small & Steven Haft; Supervising Producer: John Blanchard; Producer: James Jones; Director: John Blanchard; Casting: Julie Mossberg. Quincy Jones/David Salzman Entertainment

THE MASK- An animated series featuring the eponymous hero from Dark Horse. Executive Producers: Phil Roman, Tom Griffin, Joe Bacal, C.J. Kettler, Mike Richardson & Bob Friedman; Producer: Gary Hartle Co-Producer & Story Editor: Duane Cappizzi; Executives in Charge of Production: Bill Schultz & Carole Weiztman. Film Roman Inc in association with Sunbow Productions Inc & New Line TV.

THE PHANTOM - Lee Falk's The Ghost Who Walks comes to the movies for the second time. Producers: Robert Evans & Alan Ladd Jr; Director: Simon Wincer; Screenplay: Jeffrey Boam; Cast: Billy Zane, Treat Williams, Kristy Swanson & Catherine Zeta Jones. Robert Evans Company/Paramount Pictures. Shooting in Los Angeles, Thailand & Australia starts 2nd October 1995.

PHANTOM 2040 - The animated adventures of the futuristic descendant of Lee Falk's creation. Executive Producers: David J. Corbett, William E. Miller & Jeffrey Schon; Supervising Producer: Mary Corbett; Associate Producer: Mary Katherine Moore; Director: Stu Rosen; Story Editors: Judith Reeves-Stevens & Garfield Reeves-Stevens. Hearst Animation Productions in association with Hearst Entertainment & IDDH.

THE REAL ADVENTURES OF JONNY QUEST - animated series featuring Doug Wheeler's character - originally created as a Hanna-Barbera cartoon which led to a series of comics from Comico. Executive Producer: Buzz Potamkin; Producer/Director: Takashi; Producer/Story Editor: Peter Lawrence; Production Executive: Sherry Gunther. Hanna-Barbera Cartoons Inc.

SPIDER-MAN - animation. Executive Producers: Avi Arad & Stan Lee; Supervising Producer: Bob Richardson; Producer & Story Editor: John Semper; Co-ordinating Producer: John Cawley; Casting: Tony Pastor. Marvel Films Animation.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT: BORDELLO OF BLOOD - Inspired by the EC comic of the same name. Cast: Dennis Miller, Erika Eleniak, Angie Everhart, Chris Sarandon, Corey Feldman & Aubrey Morris; Executive Producers: Richard Donner, David Giler, Walter Hill, Joel Silver & Robert Zemeckis; Producers: Gilbert Adler & A.L. Katz; Director: Gilbert Adler; Screenplay: Bob Gale, Robert Zemeckis, A.L. Katz & Gilbert Adler. New City Productions Inc. Shooting in Vancouver, British Columbia started 12th May 1995.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES - An animated series based on the characters created by Kevin Eastman & Peter Laird. Executive Producer: Fred Wolf; Producer: Kara Vallow; Director: Bill Wolf; Executive Story Editor: David Wise. Fred Wolf Films.

THE TICK - New England Comics' super-hero, the creation of Ben Edlund, in his own animated series. Producer: Hank Tucker; Story Editor: Ben Edlund; Production Executive: Stephanie Graziano; Casting: Susan Blu. Sunbow Productions Inc in association with Graz Entertainment Inc

ULTRAFORCE- An animated series featuring characters from the Malibu Ultraverse title. Producer: Chuck Patton; Casting: Marsha Goodman. DIC Entertainment LP.

X-MEN - Animated Marvel mutant mayhem! Executive Producers: Stan Lee, Avi Arad & Joseph Calamari; Supervising Producer: Will Meugniot; Producer: Frank Squillace; Executive in Charge of Production: Dana Booton. Saban Entertainment in association with Graz Entertainment Inc.

IN PRE-PRODUCTION

* *THE CROW: CITY OF ANGELS* - The sequel to James O'Barr's original story (and the movie starring the late Brandon Lee). Producers: Edward R. Pressman & Jeff Most; Director: Tim Pope; Screenplay: David Goyer; Cast: Vincent Perez, Mia Kirshner, Iggy Pop and Ian Dury. Edward R. Pressman Film Corp in association with Jeff Most Productions. Shooting in Los Angeles has started.

ZEN: INTERGALACTIC NINJA - Based on the Entity Comics character. Executive Producer: Mark Freeman; Producer: Phillippe Diaz; Director: Brian Yuzna; Screenplay: Chris Solimine. Sceneries Entertainment Corp. Shooting in LA and Arizona starts June 1995.

IN PREPARATION

MARS ATTACKS - Based on the trading cards and Topps comic. Producers: Tim Burton & Laurie Parker; Director: Tim Burton; Screenplay: Jonathan Gems. Tim Burton Productions/Warner Bros. Shooting in Los Angeles & Washington starts December 1995.

MEN IN BLACK - Based on the series created by Lowell Cunningham and published by Aircel Comics. Producers: Walter Parkes & Laurie MacDonald; Executive Producer: Steven Spielberg; Director: Barry Sonnenfeld; Screenplay: Ed Solomon; Cast: Tommy Lee Jones & Will Smith. Amblin Entertainment

IN DEVELOPMENT

CATWOMAN - Based on the DC Comics character featured in Batman Returns. Director: Tim Burton; Screenplay: Dan Waters. Michelle Pfeiffer is expected to star. Warner Brothers.

CRYING FREEMAN- Based on the character created by Kazuo Koike & Ryoichi Ikegami. Producers: Samuel Hadida & Brian Yuzna; Director: Christopher Gan; Cast: Mark Dacascos & Julie Condra Douglas. August Entertainment.

FANTASTIC FOUR - The reason Roger Corman's Concorde Films version of the Fantastic Four was shelved; based on the Marvel Comics characters. Director: Chris Colombus. Twentieth Century Fox.

FLASH GORDON - Yet another movie based on the classic newspaper strip character who debuted in 1934. Producers: Ben Myron & David Halpern; Screenplay: David S. Goyer.

JONNY QUEST - Doug Wheeler's character - created as a Hanna-Barbera cartoon which led to a series of comics from Comico - in a live action movie. Co-Producer: Lauren Shuler-Donner; Screenplay: Fred Dekker. Turner Pictures.

LUKE CAGE - Marvel's hero for hire. Executive Producer: Bradford Smith; Producer: Ed Pressman; Director: John Singleton; Screenplay: Joe Doughrity.

PLASTIC MAN - Jack Cole's stretchable sleuth making his movie debut. Director: Bryan Spicer; Screenplay: Larry Wilson. Amblin Entertainment.

SPIDER-MAN - Maybe this time, a Marvel character will be successfully transferred to the big screen! Producer/Director/Screenplay: James Cameron. Lightstorm Entertainment-Carolco Pictures.

SUPERMAN REBORN - Even before his unfortunate accident, Christopher Reeve had dismissed talk of his playing the Son of Krypton for a fifth time but, for all that, this is effectively Superman V. Producer: Jon Peters; Screenplay: Jonathan Lemkin. Warner Brothers.

V FOR VENDETTA - Based on the Alan Moore story/character first seen in **Warrior**. Producer: Joel Silver; Director: Brett Leonard: Screenplay: Hilary Henkin.

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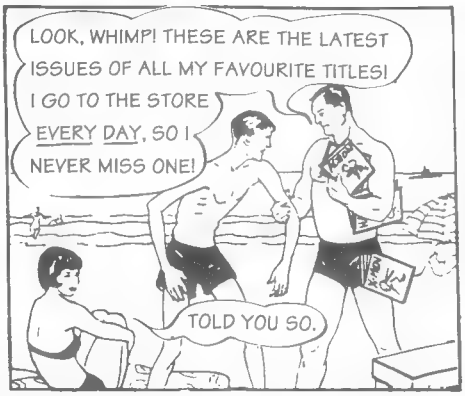

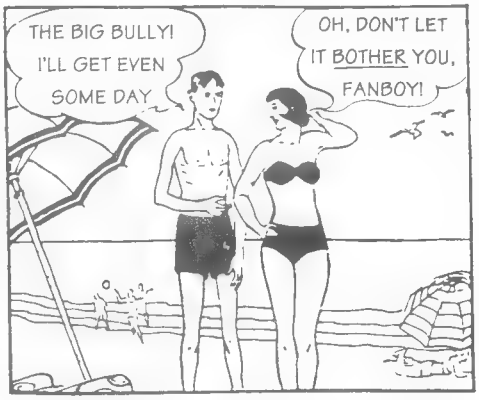

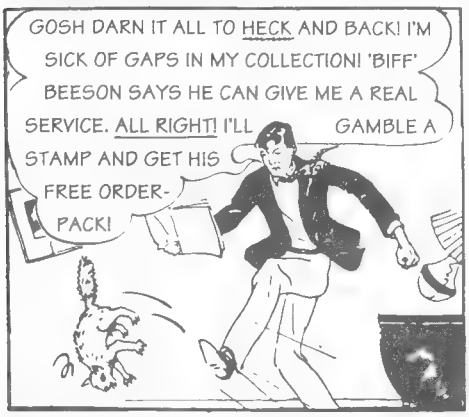
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OVER 20 YEARS OF MARTS AND MARKETPLACES

nETworks

A monthly rundown on the latest opinions of fans and professionals from Britain and America, as expressed on the computer internet. Compiled by Richard Johnston and the NETworks team.

Pitt fall

UNDER the title "Gerber off Pitt", Steve Gerber (72267,3332) posted: *Sad to say, it's official. I'll be scripting* ***Pitt*** *#10, but that will be my last issue of the book. Dale has decided he wants to write the series himself. So it goes...* After Warren Ellis enquired about his next job, Gerber replied: *Shoe department. K-Mart, Burbank. But seriously... I'll be finishing up* ***Cybernary****, of course, and then hopefully going on to a new project with Top Cow and perhaps one with Highbrow.*

From the Ashes

COMICS conversation and news web site the Comic Cafe reported a spin-off from Event Comics' **Ash**, titled **22 Brides** to begin in March 1996, co-plotted by **Ash**'s Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti, written by Fabian Nicieza and illustrated by Scott Lee.

More news from The Comic Cafe is that artist Dave Johnson will be joining Alan Moore on an upcoming issue of **WildC.A.T.S.**

Shaggy dog stories

NEWS of the latest hot comic to hit the stands comes courtesy of... Archie Comics!? Paul Castiglia (76511,3445) posted: *To the surprise of many of us here at Archie Comics,* ***Scooby Doo*** *has gone to the head of the pack in our line of Hanna-Barbera comics.*

But too much Scooby Doo can go to your head. About 2 years ago on rec.arts.comics.misc, Mark Evanier (mevanier@aol.com) admitted that he was involved with the decision to introduce the character Scrappy-Doo to the series when he worked for Hanna-Barbera and was flamed (pilloried) for weeks for his foolhardy admission.

Missed Monster

MARLOWE and Company are using the InterNet to promote all their reprint volumes. Last month it was **The Cowboy Wally Show** by Kyle Baker. This month, it's a popular series from the Eighties and early NiNeties, **Mr Monster**.

Slated as a three-volume series, Volume One will feature a new introduction by Alan Moore, with a stunning new cover by Michael T. Gilbert. ***Mr. Monster: His Books of Forbidden Knowledge*** *will be the complete presentation of Michael T. Gilbert's ground breaking Mr. Monster series, incorporating not only all previously published material but featuring new and unpublished material as well.*

Mo' Moebius

MOJO Press is using the InterNet to promote the first in a series of books, **Saga of Blueberry: Confederate Gold**, a 300 pager by Charlier and Moebius.

MojoPress want the books to be the definitive American reprints of the classic French Western. This volume will contain a history of Blueberry by Charlier and Jean-Marc Lofficier, reprints of **Blueberry** (Epic) 1, 2 and half of 3, plus the first English language printing of **Three Black Birds**, a Moebius written Blueberry adventure.

Getting online

THIS can be a complicated subject, and there are a number of magazines such as **.net**, **The InterNet** and **InterNet Today**, that can guide you. If you are a university student, you may already have InterNet access through the Computing Department.

For the rest of the world, cybercafes are appearing on high streets in most major cities. You can pop in, grab a coffee and try the wonders of the InterNet, with expert advice on hand. *Cybercafe*, *InterNet Centre* and *Electronic Cafe* are just some of these companies. If you want to go further, you need a fairly fast computer, a very fast modem and... patience.

There are a number of companies who will give you access, but it is worth taking your time. Some offer you their own service with limited access to the InterNet such as Win-UK and Compuserve.

Others, such as Demon and Pipex will give you a direct link. With some you pay a fixed fee per month while others charge for how much time you use. The best advice is to read reviews, talk to shop staff, and check your bank balance before officially joining the connected collective that is the InterNet.

Comics in the Net

The World Wide Web has literally a hundred sites catering for all sorts of comics, ranging from the professional to retail stores all over the world using it as an advertisers forum. Just look in the WWW Directories under Comics, but beware...

Unfortunately, when searching for the word "comics" on the Net, you are as likely to get to Bruce Forsyth as Bruce Banner!

The following should help you out: The first place to look for comics on the World Wide Web is Yahoo (www.yahoo.com/). This directory has been around since the Net's early days. Choose Entertainment, then Comics, and you'll be presented with a large list of World Wide Web addresses which you can then access.

Hepcats readers! If you are fed up waiting for the next issue of **Hepcats**, a

sneak preview is available at **Hero Illustrated**'s pages. Go to www.nuke.com, choose Hero and then Previews.

Doug Atkinson's **Watchmen** Annotations, a famous InterNet article has now been cross-referenced and hyperlinked by Jason Fliegal, making researching comic easier and faster. The page can be found at darwin.clas.virginia.edu/~jbf9a/ watchmen.html

A new comic company, A Squared Entertainment, are offering a free black and white preview copy of their new science-fiction comic called **Agony Acres**, to anyone on the InterNet. Simply e-mail them with your postal address to thejudge@ais.com

Harbor Point Mall (www.insv.com/) is a World Wide Web site with a number of comic book addresses. You have a choice of the Comic Book Legal Defence Fund, Exhibit A Press, Fiasco Comics, Vantage Comics, Sirius Entertainment as well as pages devoted to **Spawn** and Steve Bissette's **Tyrant**. Each is distinctly different with the **Spawn** pages (www.insv.com/spawn/) taking pride of place for graphical design, and the Comic Book Legal Defence Fund (www.insv.com/cbldf) having strong articles and discussions.

Hero Illustrated, (www.nuke.com/) now that it is only published on the Net, has been taking advantage of the high page count by including a fortnightly self-interview by Dave Sim, analysing the comic book industry, recommending solutions and taking up a lot of space to do so. **Comic Shop News**, (www.actwin.com/csn/) a free weekly newsletter distributed around comic shops, has its CSNsider column available on the InterNet weeks before it is printed.

Caption (metro.turnpike.Net/C/caption/), is devoted to the yearly alternative and small press comics convention, and to the magazine of the same name. Features include selected reprints from the magazine and information about the convention when it is made available.

Grant Morrison Voodoo Love Fetish (www.rt66.com/bobek/ gmvlf/) is a page devoted to one of Britain's popular comic writers by a self-confessed obsessed fan. Visually stunning and full of Morrison info.

The Hype (www.hype.com/) pages give exclusive information gathered on the InterNet for a number of topics, including the Hype Comics Cafe.

Net facts:

The UseNet newsgroups, cover a wide variety of comics discussion under various group "hierarchies".

The rec.arts.comics.hierarchy contains sub sections such as info, misc, x-books, marvel-universe, dc-universe, strips, marketplace, alternative and elfquest. Smaller groups in the alt.comics hierarchy include superman, batman, classics, and fan-fiction.

There is a rec.arts.manga hierarchy and individual groups such as alt.fan.Peter-David, and alt.fan.tank-girl. There are a number of comics professionals online, including Neil Gaiman, Peter David, Walt Simonson, Chris Claremont, Jim Lee, Dan Chichester, Fabian Nicieza, Scott Lobdell, Mark Waid, Warren Ellis, Larry Hama, George Perez, Steven Grant, Howard Chaykin and Barry Windsor Smith. Several comics companies have a Net presence too, including DC Comics (AOL only), Dark Horse, Marvel, Antarctic, Slave Labor, Image, Tekno and Crusade.

Comics International is on the Net, our e-mail address for correspondence is Comics@Quality.win-UK.Net.

Compuserve offers three comics forums: Comics/Animation; Comics/Publishers; Comic Strips/Funnies. All three forums offer "live" discussion facilities, enabling you to have a conversation with anyone anywhere in the world for the cost of your compuserve fees and a local phone call.

Neulogisms:

New terms with which you may be unfamiliar when starting out on the InterNet:

AOL - America Online is a specific server which provides users in the United States to access their own groups. DC Comics has an AOL point, but be warned, because pre-written software, available on magazines such as **Wizard**, is impossible to access AOL in the UK, and if access is acquired via the USA, it proves to be extremely expensive.

Occasionally information and posts sent to AOL are reposted on the main InterNet.

Net - Abbreviation for "InterNet". Lots of computers across the world joined together by satellite, by phone lines and cables. Anyone can join.

E-mail - short for electronic mail, post sent from one address (something@somewhere.else) to another across the InterNet.

Compuserve, Genie, Prodigy, Win-UK.Net - are examples of companies that provide a limited subscription access to parts of the InterNet.

Compuserve being one that provides a CB (Citizen's Band) facility. This has access to either PG rated forums or adult forums — but it must be noted they cost a lot of money, despite Compuserve's online facilities being substantially reduced in price.

WWW page - The World Wide Web. Pages of interactive text and graphics letting you watch videos, play games, listen to music, or get a specific piece of information at any time. A Website is the address which you key in for access.

User - Someone who uses a computer and is linked to the Net with it.

Post - A message sent to a newsgroup.

Newsgroup - Posts are collected under different subject headers. New groups are always being created, there's one for you out there!

Netiquette - the unwritten constitution of the InterNet. An anarchic community, everyone on the Net polices each other. Guidelines are drawn up monitoring acceptable behaviour and putting a stop to unruly newcomers. Grasping Netiquette can frustrate new users, but every guideline exists for a very good reason and the newuser groups on UseNet explain it all. Remember, just because you pay for Net access, doesn't necessarily mean that you have the right to do whatever you want with it, but with people joining groups every day, there is a call for rules to be changed.

:-) 8-) ;-) Not often seen in print, these are smileys, showing that what you've just said was meant as a joke! Essential for users without a sense of humour. Just turn your head sideways and all will be revealed. There are various versions.

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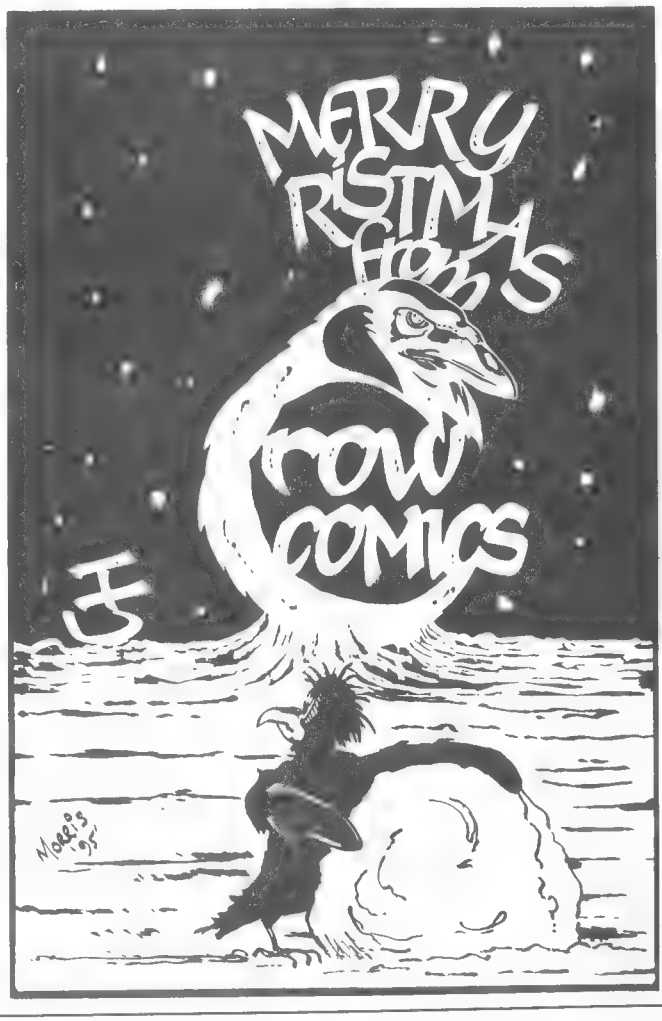

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NOTTINGHAM	**SATURDAY: FEBRUARY 3rd, APRIL 6th** VICTORIA LEISURE CENTRE, GEDLING STREET, NOTTINGHAM
PETERBOROUGH	**SATURDAY: FEBRUARY 24th, MAY 4th** GREAT NORTHERN HOTEL, STATION APPROACH, PETERBOROUGH
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OPENS MIDDAY

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READERS: You can use this Advance Listings section as an order form with your direct sale retailer or mail order supplier. Simply mark the items you require, preferably in red or blue pen or with a highlight marker. Then detach this section of the magazine and return it to your supplier, together with a note of your name, address and phone number and guarantee not missing any of the new titles being published. Certain retailers may not accept standing orders, so check with them first. Using this system will also help your supplier when ordering titles, to know which are presold.

All prices of US titles listed are in dollars. Where dollar and sterling prices (ie $1.50/£1) is stated, UK price is not the air-freighted import price, but instead denotes that the title will be nationally distributed approximately ten weeks later at a lower-than-airfreight price. Import prices are usually converted at a rate of $1.00 = 85p.

Shipping dates given are usually one week before airfreight copies arrive with your retailer/mail order supplier. All dates, prices and information are assumed to be accurate as provided by publishers. Late shipping, cancellations and changes in content will be detailed in future issues of ***Comics International****.*

Compiled by Phil Hall

Key to abbreviations used:

1 & 2 + 3	=	*Writer & penciller + inker*
b&w	=	*black & white content*
hbk	=	*hardback (book) edition*
tpbk	=	*trade paperback, squarebound, comic size*
Xpg	=	*number of interior pages*

All comics are 32 page colour titles unless stated otherwise

SHIPPING:

FEB - MAR '96

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

☐ **Cerebus 203** (Dave Sim & Gerhard) *Guys, Part 3* (of 19) Cerebus continues his descent into mind-numbing alcoholism. . $2.25

ABSTRACT STUDIOS

☐ **Strangers in Paradise 10** (Terry Moore) Katchoo is released from hospital and returns home to discover that she and Francine have been evicted. $2.75

ACADEMY COMICS

☐ **Robotech II: The Sentinels Book IV #3** (Jason Waltrip) Baker and his team struggle against the artificial planet's automated defence system. $2.95

NEW ☐ **Robotech: Mordecai 1** (Rosearik Rikki & Tavisha Wolfgarth) Gilles Vaudelli discovers a plot to destroy the Earth, but cannot decide whether or not to abandon his space exploration mission to return and give the planet his aid. $2.95

☐ **Robotech: Return to Macross 29** (Spangler & Birchfield) Salamander makes a deal with the Federated Conspirator. . . . $2.95

☐ **Robotech: Academy Blues 5** (Robert Gibson & Frances Birchfield) The launch of a new ship turns into the usual Academy fiasco. $2.95

AC COMICS

☐ **Femforce 91** (Bill Black & Brad Gorby + Mark Heike) Brimstone returns and poses a great enough threat that all of Femforce have to battle him. . . . . $2.95/$5.90

ACCLAIM

Valiant imprint

☐ **Bloodshot 49** (Greg Boone + Brad Vancata) No specific story information available. . . . $2.50

☐ **Armed and Dangerous 2** (Bob Hall) Uncle Mitch fights for his life as Eddy faces a difficult decision. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

☐ **Turok, Dinosaur Hunter 45** (Tim Truman & Jackson Guice) No specific story information available. $2.50

☐ **X-O Manowar 65** (Keith Giffen & Andy Smith) No specific story information available. . . . $2.50

Armada: Licensed imprint

NEW ☐ **The Bad Eggs 1** (Bob Layton & Don Perlin + Gonzalo Mayo) Mini-series featuring Ript and Claude, two wise-cracking survivalist dinosaurs in a dying world. Mature. . . $2.95

NEW ☐ **Killer Instinct 1** (Doug Moench & Paul Gulacy) Story set in a future devastated by a civil war started by Ultratech many years before. $2.50

☐ **Mutant Chronicles: Golgotha 2** (Paolo Parente & Alex Horley + William King) Bringing Target Games' Mutant Chronicles and Doom Trooper Universes to comics. Cover by Simon Bisley. Mature readers. $2.95

☐ **Baywatch — The Magazine 3** (VanHook Studios) The bare facts! Everything to know about the most successful syndicated TV show of all time. 64pg $4.95

NEW ☐ **Dakkon Blackblade on the World of Magic: The Gathering** (Jerry Prosser & Steve Canard + Jeff Gomez & Rags Morales + Barbara Kaalberg) Spotlighting the most lethal killer in the world of card games. . . $2.50

ANTARCTIC PRESS

☐ **Furrlough 38** (various) Anthology title continues with more anthropomorphic tales of talking animals and strange gesticulating furry things. b&w $2.95

NEW ☐ **Dragon Flux 1** (of 4; Tyrone Ford) Joe Hayabusa runs across a mysterious sword that has the ability to open a portal between Earth and the magical realm of Analon. b&w $2.95

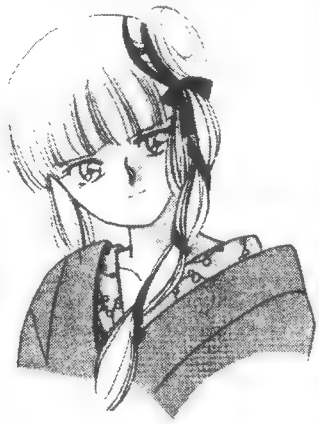
☐ **Gold Digger 28** (Fred Perry) Gina and Cheetah make a mistake on their tax returns and get audited by the IRS. b&w $2.95

NEW ☐ **Magical Mates 1** (Mio Odagi) The adventures of a thirteen year old student with a group of friends with super powers. $3.50

☐ **Warrior Nun Areala Book Two #4** (of 6; Ben Dunn) Oni is on a mission, but the last thing she expected was to be joined by the avenger Serina. $2.95

☐ **Tigers of Terra 19** (Ted Nomura) The story of Earth in an alternative scenario with WW1 Germans being aided by invading aliens. $2.95

☐ **Vampire Miyu 5** (of 6; Harumi Kakinouchi) A tale of Miyu's past: When her mother hides Miyu in the cellar to prevent her from being captured by the vampire clan, she is unaware that her daughter's fate is already sealed.. . . . . $2.95



BIG ENTERTAINMENT

Tekno Comix Imprint

NEW ☐ **I-Bots/Lady Justice Crossover 1** (Steven Grant & Pat Broderick) Killiane goes missing and the I-Bots go searching, only to find her possessed by Lady Justice. . $2.25

☐ **Mr Hero, the Newmatic Man 16** (Jim Vance & Ted Slampyak + Dave Hunt) Hero, Jenny and the mysterious Adam Cain are on a collision course with Kalighoul and Teknophage. $2.25

☐ **Neil Gaiman's Lady Justice 10** (C.J. Henderson & Steve Lieber) No specific story information available. Mature readers. $2.25

☐ **The Primortals 14** (James Chambers & Scot Eaton + Mike Barreiro) Earth faces an unknown but deadly destiny. $2.25

☐ **Mickey Spillane's Mike Danger 10** (Max Allen Collins & ?) Danger finds a web of secrets and truths about the perfect society he lives in. $2.25

☐ **Xander in Lost Universe 7** (Ron Fortier & Paul Abrams + Terry Beatty) Lady Sensua brings her diabolical scheme much closer to victory. $2.25

BONGO COMICS

☐ **Simpsons Comics 17** (Brian Gottlieb & Jim Morrison) Bart unveils his new venture: The BBC (Bart Broadcasting Company)$2.25

BROADWAY COMICS

☐ **Fatale 2** (Jim Shooter + Janet Jackson & Bob James + Al Weiss + J. G. Jones + Frank McLaughlin) Fatale and Bill are kidnapped by the Brotherhood in New York's Central Park. $2.50

☐ **Shadow State 3** (Jim Shooter + Janet Jackson + Stephan Gaudino + Hoang Nguyen + Art Nichols) Troy has been transformed into his favourite comic book hero. . $2.50

☐ **Powers That Be 4** (Jim Shooter + Andrew Wendell & Art Nichols + J.G. Jones) More background on the mysterious Xolos Cor as he battles the mysterious Pauly. $2.50

CALIBER PRESS

NEW ☐ **Cavewoman 1** (Bud Root) Rain returns for a

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new series as she and the time-travelling town of Marshville drop in on the Cretaceous period for a spot of Raptor baiting. b&w $2.95

☐ **Doorman: Family Secrets 2** (Mike Leonard & James Lyle) Doorman is drawn deeper into the mystery of the twins. b&w . $2.95

☐ **Kilroy is Here 7** (Joe Pruett & Mike Perkins) Kilroy travels to Sarajevo in an attempt to aid the unjustly persecuted victims of the civil war. b&w $2.95

☐ **Negative Burn 32** (various) Anthology, including Joyce Brabner & Mark Badger's *Survivors*; Brian Bolland's *Mr Mamoulian*; *The Wall* by Stefan Petrucha & Craig Gilmore; *Alan Moore's Songbook* illustrated by Jordan Raskin. Mature readers. b&w 64pg $3.95

☐ **Oz 14** (Ralph Griffith & Stuart Kerr + Daniel Bryan) Ozma manages to persuade the Munchkins to join in the quest and retaliate against the Nome King. b&w $2.95

NEW ☐ **The Scythe 1** (Gregg Kendrick & Ed Herrera) By day he is a mild mannered psychiatrist, by night he is a crazy psycho hero. b&w $2.95

☐ **Tattoo 2** (Ralph Griffith + Stuart Kerr & Jake Jacobsen) Tattoo takes on the Rasta Man in zombie-infested New Orleans. $2.95

☐ **Wordsmith 2** (Dave Darrigo & R. G. Taylor) A writer struggling to earn a living finds he has trouble discerning the real world from his fantasy world. b&w 48pg . . $3.95

CHAOS COMICS

☐ **Evil Ernie: Straight To Hell 5** (Brian Pulido & Josue Justinano + Jason Jensen) Ernie is alone again after failing to retrieve Lady Death, so he returns to hell to cause much aggro for Pagan. *Final issue* $2.95

COSMIC COMICS

☐ **Death Race 2021 #2** (Pat Mills + Tony Skinner & Mark Campos + Don Schaeffer) The first organised race in twenty years is underway and that means trouble for Frankenstein. $2.50

CRUSADE

NEW ☐ **Horseman 1** (Bill Tucci & Ken Kwon + Otti Mshindo + Tim Guttierez) New series from Crusade, guest-starring Shi, which introduces a 14th Century reincarnation of a Korean Horse warrior. $2.95

☐ **Shi: The Way of the Warrior 8** (Bill Tucci & Tim Guttierez & Dicky Asencio) A new era begins with a renewed quest for vengeance and a brand-new costume. . $2.95

☐ **Tomoe 2** (Bill Tucci & Dan Mishkin & Amanda Conner + Jimmy Palmiotti) Three-issue series which runs parallel to **Shi**, featuring a deadly, but beautiful, Japanese martial arts expert. $2.50

DARK HORSE

Dark Horse Comics

☐ **Adventures of the Mask 2** (Michael Eury & Neil Vokes + Jay Geldhof and Matt Webb) Based on the animated TV series. . . . $2.50

☐ **Andrew Vachss' Cross 4** (C. Williamson & Shannon Londin-Gallant + Monty Sheldon + James Colbert) The tale of a homophobic prostitute who receives parts of gay people's bodies in exchange for sex. Mature readers. $2.95

NEW ☐ **Arzach** (Moebius) Collecting the definitive works of Jean Giraud's science fiction fantasy. 80pg Mature readers. $6.95

☐ **Dark Horse Presents 105** (anthology) Beginning the *Big Blown Baby* (Bill Wray & Robert Loren Fleming); *Godzilla* (Ed Brubaker & Dave Cooper); *The One Trick Rip-Off* (Paul Pope). Mature readers. $2.95

☐ **Grendel Tales: The Devil May Care 3** (Terry LaBan & Peter Doherty) Albert is about to become a Grendel, his life sorted. But on the horizon looms the formidable figure of his mother! $2.95

☐ **The Foot Soldiers 2** (of 12; Jim Krueger + Michael Avon Oeming + Jason Martin + Laura Allred) Set in the future, two kids have to become new heroes for a dystopian generation. Alex Ross cover. $2.95

Dark Horse Heroes

☐ **Ghost 11** (Eric Luke & David Bullock + Chris Chalenor) Ghost hides from her sister Margo, who has been transformed into Ghost's worst nightmare. $2.50

☐ **The Mask 10: World Tour 3** (Robert Loren Fleming & Gary Erskine) The Mask vs the heroes of Dark Horse Heroes. The green guy causes havok at every turn for Ghost, X and King Tiger. . . $2.50

NEW ☐ **Walter: Campaign of Terror 1** (of 4; John Arcudi & Doug Mahnke + Keith Williams) The Mask's mountainous

arch-enemy has finally been brought in by the cops and is given his day in court. And boy, what a day that turns out to be. $2.50
☐ **X 23** (Steven Grant & Javier Saltares) Wildboy Willie, Gamble and Coffin are on an Arcadia killing spree and X is their ultimate target. $2.50

Dark Horse Licensed titles

NEW ☐ **Aliens: Mondo Heat** (Henry Gilroy & Ronnie del Carmen + Pamela Rambo) Herk Mondo returns with an even bigger gun than he had in **Mondo: Pest**, to do some alien exterminating. *One-shot.* $2.50
☐ **GI Joe 3** (Mike Barr & Tatsuya Ishida + Scott Reed) No story information available. Cover by Breyfogle. $1.95
☐ **Godzilla 9** (of 12; Alex Cox & Brandon McKinney + Andrew Pepoy + Rachelle Menashe) A nutty professor has developed a time travelling device with one sole purpose: World domination. He plans to travel back in time and capture a young Godzilla to change the course of history. $2.50
☐ **Indiana Jones and the Sargasso Pirates 3** (of 4; Karl Kesel + Bernie Mireault & Eduardo Barreto) Indy is the prime suspect in the murder of the Sea Witch. He journeys to Cairo in an attempt to solve the riddle and clear his name. $2.50
☐ **Space Usagi 2** (of 3; Stan Sakai) Usagi is stranded on a world full of giant insects as he fights for the honour of Rhogen. $2.95
☐ **Tarzan/John Carter: Warlord of Mars 3** (of 4; Bruce Jones & Brett Blevins) Tarzan has one burning desire, courtesy of Martian temptress Purid-Mos: Find John Carter and kill him. $2.50
☐ **Tarzan vs Predator at the Earth's Core 2** (of 4; Walt Simonson & Lee Weeks) Tarzan battles a Predator who is killing the best warriors of Pellucidar. . $2.50

Star Wars licensed titles

NEW ☐ **Star Wars: X-Wing — Rogue Squadron: The Phantom Affair 1** (of 4; Mike Stackpole & Darko Macan + Edvin Biukovic) Resolicited and packaged as a new mini-series. Wedge Antilles and his squadron feature in a story set shortly after the *Return of the Jedi*. $2.95
NEW ☐ **Star Wars: Jabba The Hut — Betrayal** (Jim Woodring & Art Wetherall + Monty Sheldon + Pamela Rambo) Jabba's right-hand "thing" has plotted the fat guy's downfall and has rallied Jabba's slaves to revolt. $2.50
☐ **Star Wars: Splinter of the Mind's Eye 2** (Terry Austin & Chris Sprouse) Luke dances with the Dark Force while attempting to locate an all-powerful Mimban crystal on a deserted planet. $2.50

Legend creator-owned titles

NEW ☐ **Sin City: That Yellow Bastard 1** (Frank Miller) Hartigan is a 30-year veteran of the Sin City PD. He's got just one more hour to go before his retirement when an informant rings with information about his one unsolved case. Hartigan decides he's going to go out with a bang! Mature readers. $2.95

NEW ☐ **Monkeyman & O'Brien Special** (Arthur Adams) Collecting the four back-up strips in **Hellboy: Seeds of Destruction** in a 32-page one-shot. The origin of O'Brien and the arrival of Monkeyman. $2.50

Dark Horse Manga titles

☐ **Gunsmith Cats 10** (Kenichi Sonoda) The Cats' adventures conclude with a harrowing tale of a fifteen year old drug trafficker who is accusing her parole officer of further corrupting her. Mature readers. $2.95
☐ **3 x 3 Eyes: Curse of the Gesu 5** (of 5; Yuzo Takada) Yakumo has died and his life will never be the same. Pai has transformed him into the living dead. He plans to leave Japan but the monstrous Gesu has other plans... . . . . $2.95
☐ **You're Under Arrest 3** (Kosuke Fujishima) The cop duo are on the trail of a cat burgler with a fetish for silk panties. For all ages! $2.95
☐ **Legend of Mother Sarah: City of the Children 2** (of 7; Katsuhiro Otomo & Takumi Nagayasu) Sarah continues her search for her missing children as she and Tsue enter a mining village controlled by a child dictator. Mature readers. . . . $3.95
☐ **Oh My Goddess: Mystical Engine** (Kosuke Fujishima) Mara grants Megumi his wish to be a drag racing star. $2.95

DC COMICS

DC: Vertigo mature titles

☐ **Blood & Shadows 2** (of 4; Joe Lansdale & Mark Nelson) Detective Chet Daly is drawn into a grisly case of homicide and horror and it all leads back to his girlfriend's brother. $1.95
☐ **Books of Magic 23** (John Ney Rieber & Peter Gross) Tim celebrates his fourteenth birthday with a visit from the Strafenkinder — exploding children! $2.50
NEW ☐ **Death: The Time of Your Life** (of 4; Neil Gaiman & Chris Bachalo + Mark Pennington) What is the relationship between Death, Foxglove and Hazel? $2.50
NEW ☐ **Dog Moon** (Robert Hunter & Timothy Truman) Horror/love story by the Grateful Dead lyricist about a truck driver who transports the "just dead" to the place awaiting them. . $2.50
☐ **Industrial Gothic 5** (Ted

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We'd like to wish all our customers past, present and future:

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY & PROSPEROUS 1996

HOLIDAY OPENING HOURS

(Normal except as stated below)

CHRISTMAS EVE	10.00am to 4.00pm
CHRISTMAS DAY	Closed
BOXING DAY	Closed
Wednesday, 27th December	10.00am to 5.00pm
Thursday, 28th December	10.00am to 8.00pm
Friday, 29th December	10.00am to 6.00pm
Saturday - 30th December	9.00am to 6.00pm
NEW YEAR'S EVE	10.00am to 4.00pm
NEW YEAR'S DAY	Closed

WALK TO THE EDGE AND LET YOUR IMAGINATION FREEFALL!

McKeever) Final episode features the liberation of Pencil and Nickel. $2.50

☐ **Hellblazer 100** (Paul Jenkins & Sean Phillips) Constantine lies in a coma while his soul argues the toss with his dead father. Lucifer is hovering, waiting for the remains of the disagreement. 48pg $3.50

☐ **The Invisibles 19** (Grant Morrison & Phil Jimenez) Jim Crow and the team mount a magical search for King Mob, who is just about to reveal the secrets of the Invisibles. $2.50

☐ **Preacher 13** (Garth Ennis & Steve Dillon) *Hunters, Part 1* (of 4). Jesse is targeted by two secret organisations and Cassidy makes a return. $2.50

☐ **Seekers: Into the Mystery 4** (J.M DeMatteis & Glen Barr) Lucas Hart has his spirit resurrected despite his past transgressions$2.50

☐ **Sandman Mystery Theatre 36** (Matt Wagner + Steven T. Seagle & Warren Pleece) *The Mist. Part 1* (of 4). The Golden Age Starman and the former holder of the name The Mist both feature in this story that ties into **Starman** continuity. $2.25

☐ **Shade, the Changing Man 70** (Peter Milligan & Richard Case) *Final Issue.* Shade is reunited with Kathy, but what will the effects of the madness have on them?. $2.25

☐ **Swamp Thing 165** (Mark Millar & Curt Swan + Kim DeMulder) Swamp Thing must decide whether Chester has really become a fascist cop or if this is just an alternate version of things to come. . $2.25

☐ **Vamps: Hollywood & Vein 3** (Elaine Lee & Will Simpson) The bikers from Hell and Screech's ex-boyfriend continue the sadistic torture of their captive. $2.25

DC licensed titles

☐ **Animaniacs 12** (various) adapted from the Warner animated cartoon series. $1.50

☐ **Looney Tunes 24** (various) More fun and games featuring the Warner's cartoon characters in new and wacky adventures. $1.50

DC: Milestone imprint

☐ **Hardware 38** (John Rozum & Eric Battle + Gabby Gabriele) Hardware must fight his way off a space station and avoid the clutches of the odious Malleus. $2.50

☐ **Icon 36** (Dwayne McDuffie & Mark Bright + Romeo Tanghal) Rocket & Icon decide once and for all where their destiny lies. $2.50

☐ **Static 34** (Adam Blaustein + Yves Fezzani & Jeff Moore) Static fights the Rubberband Man. Who will snap first? $2.50

DC Universe

☐ **Action Comics 720** (David Michelinie & Keiron Dwyer + Denis Rodier) Lois calls off her engagement to Clark Kent. . $1.95

☐ **Aquaman 19** (Peter David & Marty Egeland + Howard Shum) Arthur heads for the Himalayas and runs into Ocean Master. . . $1.75

☐ **Azrael 16** (Denis O'Neil & Barry Kitson + Jim Pascoe) Azrael, Batman, Catwoman and Nightwing battle the plague as two old foes reappear in Jean Paul's life. $1.95

☐ **Batman 529** (Doug Moench & Kelley Jones + John Beatty) Azrael returns to Gotham with a possible vaccine for the plague sweeping the city. $1.95

☐ **Batman Chronicles 4** (Garth Ennis & John McCrea + various) The Hitman debuts shortly before his new series and Batman finds the plague getting out of control. $2.95

☐ **Batman: Shadow of the Bat 49** (Alan Grant & Vince Giarrano + Ray McCarthy) Poison Ivy tries to sell the vaccine to the highest bidder. $1.95

☐ **Catwoman 32** (Chuck Dixon & Jim Balent + Bob Smith) Catwoman struggles across Gotham with a survivor of the plague. Someone who just might be able to help synthesise a serum. $1.95

☐ **Deathstroke 58** (Marv Wolfman & Alan Caldwell + Curt Shoultz) The new Deathstroke wants to test his new toys, so he accepts a job to track and kill... The Joker. . $2.25

☐ **Detective Comics 695** (Chuck Dixon & Graham Nolan + Scott Hanna) Robin is dying of the plague while Batman and Gordon fight their way out of the burning Babylon Towers. $1.95

☐ **Extreme Justice 15** (Robert Washington III & Tom Morgan + Ken Branch) The return of the original Booster Gold is spoilt when the Slavemaster demands his spaceship back. $1.75

☐ **Firebrand 3** (Brian Augustyn & Sal Velluto) Alex Sanchez catches up with deranged kidnappers, but is still not sure whether he can control his new-found powers. $1.75

☐ **Flash 112** (Mark Waid & Anthony Castrillo & Hanibal Rodriguez) There's a new Flash in town — is it Wally or some new owner of the speed force? . $1.75

☐ **Green Lantern 73** (Ron Marz & Paul Pelletier + Romeo Tanghal) Kyle and Wonder Woman attempt to work out the new Green Lantern's rather ineffectual fighting methods. $1.75

☐ **Guy Gardner 41** (Beau Smith & Marc Campos + Mike Parobeck + Dan Davis) Guy faces trouble as a result of his animated cartoon series and things with Ice (of the JLA) begin to really "heat up"! . . $1.75

☐ **Green Arrow 107** (Chuck Dixon & Rudolfo DiMaggio + Robert Campanella) Green Arrow is asked to be the bodyguard of a child who rules a small emirate. $2.25

☐ **Hawkman 31** (Chris Priest & Howard Porter + Barb Kaalberg) A new direction for the renegade of Thanagar. $2.25

NEW ☐ **Hitman 1** (Garth Ennis & John McCrea) A new series follows Tommy Monaghan, a meta-human assassin, specialising in killing superheroes & villains.$2.25

☐ **Justice League America 110** (Gerard Jones & Chuck Wojtkiewicz) El Diablo returns as the team continues to dig up every useless character ever created by DC. $1.75

☐ **Legion of Super-Heroes 79** (Tom Peyer & Tom McCraw + Lee Moder + Ron Boyd) The Fatal Five attack and after kicking the Legion around the universe, only one member stands between them and total success. $2.25

☐ **Lobo 26** (Alan Grant & Horley-Parente Studio) "Did you spill my pint?" asks the ruthless Erik the Khund — Newcastle on Saturday night is a safer place! $2.25

☐ **Man-Bat 3** (Chuck Dixon & Flint Henry + Eduardo Barreto) Man-Bat faces his final battle in the conclusion of the mini-series. $2.25

NEW ☐ **Mister Miracle 1** (Kevin Dooley & Steve Crespo) Resolicited from November — see *News America* section.$1.95

☐ **The New Gods 7** (Rachel Pollack & Luke Ross + Brian Garvey) Darkseid is back, apparently emerging from the body of Orion. Is the nightmare starting all over again? $1.95

☐ **The Power of Shazam 14** (Jerry Ordway & Gil Kane + Mike Manley) Captain Marvel journeys to New York and a battle with Chain Lightning. $1.75

☐ **Robin 28** (Chuck Dixon & Mike Wieringo + Stan Woch) Azrael arrives too late with a cure for Tim's condition! $1.95

☐ **Showcase '96 #4** (Brian Augustyn & Scot Eaton + various) Featuring Firebrand: The Golden Age Shade meets the original Doctor Fate, and The Demon returns. 48pg $2.95

☐ **Sovereign Seven 10** (Chris Claremont & Dwayne Turner) S7 go to Gotham in search of a missing coffee consignment and run into a rather impulsive guest-star. . $1.95

☐ **The Spectre 40** (John Ostrander & Tom Mandrake) The Spectre battles Captain Fear and his pirates in the Bermuda Triangle. . . $2.25

☐ **Starman 18** (James Robinson & Tony Harris + Wade Von Grawbadger) The original Starman meets his arch-foe The Mist in a scene setter for the **Sandman Mystery Theatre** story. . . . $2.25

☐ **Superboy 26** (Karl Kesel & Staz Johnson + Doug Hazlewood) Superboy and Tana reach an important decision in their relationship. $2.95

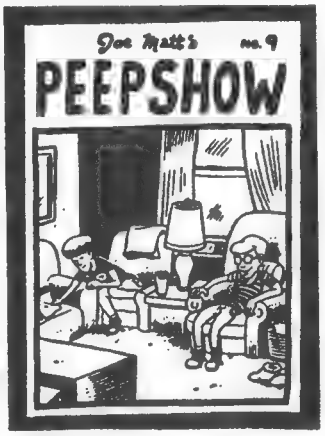
☐ **Superman: Man of Steel 55** (Louise Simonson & Jon Bogdanove + Dennis Janke) Clark gets more involved with Lori Lemaris, while Lois attracts the attention of two new suitors. $1.95

☐ **Superman 111** (Dan Jurgens & Ron Frenz + Joe Rubinstein) Superman is bewildered by strange things happening in Metropolis. Could a rascally imp be responsible? $1.95

☐ **Wonder Woman 108** (John Byrne) Wonder Woman faces the Demon and the Phantom Stranger. Morgaine Le Fey targets Diana in her quest for immortality and stands a good chance of beating the Amazon warrior. $1.95

DRAWN & QUARTERLY

☐ **Peepshow 9** (Joe Matt) Recounting Joe's childhood, which was full of temper tantrums and abusive language. b&w . . . $3.50



EDDIE CAMPBELL

☐ **Eddie Campbell's Bacchus 10** (Eddie Campbell) King Bacchus and

Collage walk through a landscape of sex until they come across an unexpected character. $2.95

FANTAGRAPHICS

☐ **Hate 22** (Peter Bagge) Buddy's patience wears thin when Lisa spends more time with his sick father than she does with him. Mature readers. $2.95

NEW ☐ **Junkwaffel Volume 2** (Vaughn Bodé) Collection of the surreal cartoonist's work through the years. Mature readers. 80pg $14.95

☐ **Zero Zero March/April** (various) Featuring a new Charles Burns strip and the pick of the current independent hits. Mature readers. $5.95

HARRIS COMICS

☐ **Vengeance of Vampirella 23** (Tom Sniegoski & Wilf McGuiness + Nathan Massengill) Vampirella stands alone against the hordes of hell. $2.95

☐ **Vampirella Strikes 3** (Tim Quinn & Oscar Moline + Mark Farmer) Vampy confronts a grizzly subway stalker. $2.95

NEW ☐ **Cyber Frog 1** (Ethan Van Sciver) A frog with an attitude and lots of heavy artillery. Sounds like a daunting prospect. $2.95

IMAGE COMICS

☐ **Black Anvil 2** (Len Wein & Frank Gomez) Strykeforce member gets his own three-issue mini-series. $2.50

☐ **Backlash 17** (Sean Ruffner & Brett Booth + Mel Rubi) Backlash is cast as a traitor — the conspiracy about him is a thick one. . . $2.50

NEW ☐ **Black & White 1** (Art & Pamela Thibert) Ongoing series featuring the husband & wife mercenary team. $2.50

☐ **Black Ops 2** (Norton + Bury & Norton + Hope) Wildstorm team featuring a group of special operative soldiers. $2.50

NEW ☐ **Bloodpool 1** (Jo Duffy & Patrick Lee) Task, Rubble, Psilence, Wylder and Seoul are back and facing a racist supremacist. $2.50

☐ **Bone 23** (Jeff Smith) Fone Bone comes face to face with the mysterious menace haunting Barrelhaven. $2.50

☐ **Casual Heroes 2** (Motown Machineworks; of 5; Kevin McCarthy + John Strangeland) The story of a bunch of twenty-somethings who have nothing better to do than pose around all day as superheroes. $2.25

☐ **Chapel 6** (Brian Witten & Calvin Irving) Guest-starring Spawn in the second part of a story exploring the former friends' relationship. $2.50

☐ **Crush 3** (of 5; Motown Machineworks; Mike Baron & Steve Harris + Reg Jones) A psychiatrist turns vigilante at night to hunt down the scum on the streets. $2.25

☐ **Cybernary 4** (of 5; Steve Gerber + Jeff Rebner & Dick Friend) Cybernary finds her lost partner, but he has been horribly changed by the forces of Vandalia. $2.50

☐ **Cyberforce 20** (Marc Silvestri & David Finch) Cyberforce clashes with the cosmic aliens responsible for the downfall of cyberdata. Plus the team begins to disintegrate further. $2.50

NEW ☐ **Cyberpunx 1** (Rob Liefeld) All-new SF team of computer generated superheroes courtesy of Mr Original. . . . $2.50

NEW ☐ **Dart 1** (Bruce Love + Julie Ditrich & Jozef Szekeres) One-shot spotlighting the former leader of Freak Force. $2.50

☐ **Deathblow 25** (Choi & Scott) Featuring a guest appearance by Team 7 in the conclusion of *Brothers in Arms*. $2.50

NEW ☐ **Defcon 4 #1** (Mat Broome + Jeff Marriote & Mat Broome + Edwin Rosell) Four-issue series set in a futuristic Japan about four people who have identical dreams. $2.50

NEW ☐ **Gen 13: Ordinary Heroes 1** (of 2; Adam Hughes + Mark Farmer) The young team races to stop a strange creature from destroying the city. . . $2.50

NEW ☐ **Glory Lingerie Issue 1** (various) Comics such as these have their uses, we just don't like to talk about them. $2.50

☐ **Grifter 10** (Steve Seagle & Ryan Benjamin + Tom McWeeney) The ex-WildC.A.T.s member faces an unusual situation in Los Angeles. *Final issue.* $2.50

☐ **Glory 0** (Jo Duffy & Mike Deodato) The virtually-naked super-heroine's past is explored in a jump on point for new readers. . . $1.95

NEW ☐ **Lethal 1** (Marat Mychaels) What happened when Crypt sent Lethal into the future and how she survived. $2.25

NEW ☐ **Man Against Time 1** (of 6; Motown Machineworks; Brett Lewis & Gino DiCicco + Andrew Pepoy) A story set simultaneously in the past, present and future. $2.25

☐ **Maximage 3** (Eric Stephenson & Fabio Laguna) A young girl is bestowed enormous power, among other things. $2.50

☐ **Maxx 23** (Sam Kieth & Bill Loebs) Bill considers suicide and only Sarah, her hand, and the power can save him. $1.95

☐ **Mike Grell's Maggie the Cat 2** (Mike Grell & Brian Snoddy) Maggie has been snatched by terrorists and only the British government can help, and they are being unusually unresponsive. $2.50

☐ **New Man 2** (Rob Liefeld + Erica Stephenson & Karl Altstaetter) Guest-starring Jim Lee's WildC.A.T.s in a tale of discovery and betrayal. $2.50

☐ **New Force 2** (Eric Stephenson & Todd Nauck) The Newmen face the perils of Pilot in a tide of racial hatred. $2.50

☐ **Prophet 2** (Chuck Dixon & Stephen Platt) Prophet sets out to unearth his new destiny. . . . $2.50

☐ **New Shadowhawk 6** (Kurt Busiek & James Fry) Someone's been arrested for being Shadowhawk, but have they got the right man? $2.50

☐ **Ripclaw 4** (David Wohl & Anthony Winn) Continuing the feral Cyberforce member and his journey with his destiny. $2.50

☐ **The Savage Dragon 26** (Erik Larsen) The new Overlord is crowned as the gang war rages in the streets of Chicago. . . . $2.50

☐ **Strikeback! 2** (Jonathan Peterson & Kevin Maguire) Reprinting the Malibu/Bravura title with new pages of art. $2.50

☐ **Spawn/WildC.A.T.s 2** (Alan Moore & Scott Clark) In 1995, Grifter and Zealot have an argument with Spawn. In 2015, a former hero has conquered the USA. What is the link & who is the former hero? $2.50

☐ **Stormwatch 33** (Bill Kaplan & Renato Arlem) Stormwatch's original team returns to shake up proceedings. $2.50

☐ **Spawn 44** (Todd McFarlane & Tony Daniel + Tim Conrad) The introduction of new warrior angel, Tiffany. She poses more of threat than Angela ever could for good ol' Al. $1.95

☐ **Spawn 45** (Todd McFarlane & Greg Capullo) Continued from the previous issue. Spawn faces the wrath of Tiffany. $1.95

☐ **Supreme 36** (Eric Stephenson & Joe Bennett) Kid Supreme is forced to face his racial tendencies. $2.50

☐ **Team 7 III: Dead Reckoning 2** (Chuck Dixon & Wildstorm Productions) The team's final mission is underway and they are all separated. Questions about why they split up the first time are asked. $2.50

☐ **Union 12** (Michael Heisler + Allen Im) *Final issue.* Setting the scene for major changes in the Wildstorm Universe (or a chance to help increase sales on the last issue, perhaps?) $2.50

☐ **21 #2** (Silvestri & Tan) The SF adventure continues. $2.50

NEW ☐ **Weapon Zero 1** (Walter Simonson & Joe Benitez) The team return in a new adventure and accept the fact that they all come from different parts of Earth history. $2.50

☐ **Wetworks 15** (Francis Takenaga & Tom Raney) Spotlight falls on Mother One in this fill-in issue to give Portacio a break from deadlines. $2.50

☐ **WildC.A.T.s 27** (Alan Moore & Scott Clark) Behind the walls of the Kheran Senate and an exploration into the politics of the Daemonites. Yep, sounds like Alan Moore. $2.50

☐ **Youngblood 5** (Rob Liefeld & Eric Stephenson + Roger Cruz) The aftermath of Extreme Destroyer is having a profound effect on the heroes. $2.50

☐ **Witchblade 4** (Brian Haberlin + David Wohl & Michael Turner) Sara Pezzini gets very close to uncovering the secret of the Witchblade. $2.50

KITCHEN SINK

☐ **The Crow: Dead Time 2** (of 3; James O'Barr + John Wagner & Alex Maleev) Journey back to the 1860s, where Joshua, a Kansas farmer, and his family are assaulted by renegade soldiers. His family butchered, Joshua narrowly escapes. Flash to the present where his quest for vengeance has just begun. Mature readers. $2.95

☐ **Oink: Heaven's Butcher 2** (John Mueller) Continuing the tale of a pig out for revenge against the establishment. Mature readers. $4.95

☐ **Death Rattle 3** (various) Including the lost pages of Jim O'Barr's **The Crow** and Zane Campbell's *Alcoholic Janitor*. Mature readers. $2.95

☐ **Lost Girls 2** (Alan Moore & Melinda Gebbie) Further erotic adventures of three girls. . . $2.75

MARVEL

Marvel Edge imprint

☐ **Daredevil 351** (J. M. DeMatteis & Ron Wagner + Bill Rienhold) Daredevil is back. The original red and yellow costumed hero, along with Foggy Nelson, Karen Page and Matt Murdock. $1.95

☐ **Doc Samson 4** (Dan Slott & Roberto Flores + Tom Wegrzyn) Doc is in dire straits. Only Polaris and Geiger can save him. Concluding part. $1.95

☐ **Ghost Rider 72** (Ivan Velez Jr & Salvador Larroca + Sergio Melia) Ghost Rider is accused of killing underworld top dogs. John Blaze returns to sort out the mess. $1.95

☐ **Incredible Hulk 440** (Peter David & Angel Medina) *Ghosts of the Future, Part 5*, (of 5) The Hulk stands alone on Arctic tundra with just Thor and a thermo-nuclear device standing between him and his new found destiny. Continues in **Avengers** 397. . . . . $1.95
☐ **Punisher 6** (John Ostrander & Pat Broderick + Chris Ivy) The Punisher becomes the target for the Russian mafia and the mutant-killing cyborg Firefox. $1.95

Marvel Heroes imprint

☐ **Avengers Unplugged 4** (Glenn Herdling & John Statema) The wedding of the Absorbing Man and Titania. They want a quiet day but they aren't likely to get it. . $0.99
☐ **Captain America 450** (Mark Waid & Ron Garney + Denis Rodier) Cap is branded a traitor and told he must leave the USA or be shot. $1.50
☐ **Captain Marvel 5** (Fabian Nicieza & Darrick Gross) How will Captain Marvel exact vengeance against the Godstalker, the Celestial? $1.95
☐ **Fantastic Force 18** (Tom Brevoort + Mike Kanterovich & Dante Bastianoni + Ralph Cabrera) The final issue. Diablo and the Force go head-to-head as the evil one unleashes his Mephistoid. $1.75
☐ **Fantastic Four 411** (Tom Defalco & Paul Ryan & Danny Bulanadi) Black Bolt goes berserk. Sue undergoes a major change and Reed adjusts to life back with the team. $1.50
☐ **Force Works 22** (Dan Abnett + Andy Lanning & Hector Oliveira + Rey Garcia) The team cannot overcome what has befallen them and so they disband. The Avengers seems to be the only home for many of them, but will they be accepted back? $1.50
☐ **Iron Man 327** (Terry Kavanagh & Jimmy Cheung + Mark McKenna) *Iron Man: Day One.* A new life, a new love and a new world for the armoured Avenger. $1.50
☐ **Marvel vs DC 3** (Peter David & Dan Jurgens + Claudio Castellini + Paul Neary + Josef Rubinstein) Hulk vs Superman; Batman vs Captain America; Superboy vs Spider-Man; Wolverine vs Lobo; Wonder Woman vs Storm. Plus the birth of a new intercompany superhero who will feature in both Marvel and DC Universes. $3.95
☐ **Thor 497** (William Messner-Loebs & Mike Deodato Jr) Thor and the Enchantress are no longer gods. They both begin to come to terms with being mortal. $1.50
☐ **War Machine 25** (Dan Abnett & Freddy Haynes + Johnny Greene) War Machine turns his back on Earth and heads for a new life in the stars. *Final issue.* $1.50

X-Men family

☐ **Cable 30** (Jeph Loeb & Ian Churchill) Nathan Summers versus Nathan Summers and one of them walks away a different man. $1.95
☐ **Excalibur 96** (Warren Ellis & Carlos Pacheco) Mountjoy arrives on Muir Island to give the British team the same treatment he gave to Bishop. $1.95
☐ **Generation X 14** (Scott Lobdell & ? + Mark Buckingham) Emplate lashes out and gets his face kicked in. Bishop drops in on the Academy to lend a helping hand. $1.95
☐ **Storm 3** (of 4; Warren Ellis & Terry Dodson + Karl Story) Storm discovers the truth behind the Gene Nation. Cable discovers why Forge and Ororo split up. And, how do the dead get up and walk? $2.95
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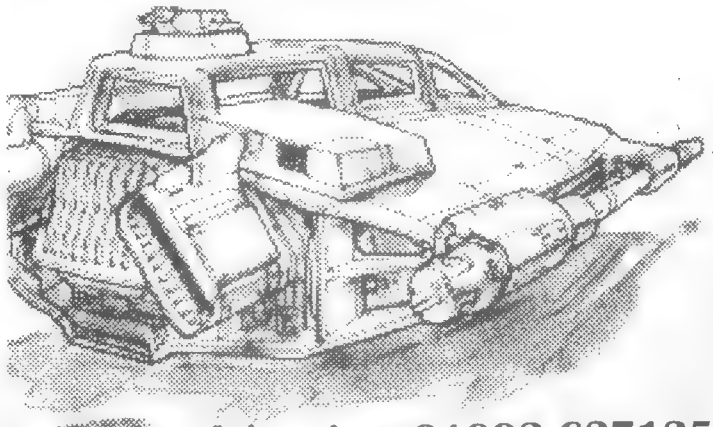

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As such, the opinions stated do not necessarily reflect those of the publication, but space will be given in subsequent issues to opposing views. Editing of accepted manuscripts will be done only as a matter of grammar, clarity and space consideration.

Perspectives of Vertigo

Comment by Julian Eales, Rushden, Northants

FOR THE sake of accuracy, I'd like to put a different spin on the comment made by Colin Rogers of Luton in **Comics International** #61. I was at the Vertigo Panel at UKCAC'95, but obviously a different one to Mr Rogers.

Far from him droning on about how wonderful Vertigo was all the time, my abiding memory is of Grant Morrison and others complaining about the low sales figures. Editors-in-residence Shelly Roeberg and Julie Rottenberg seemed to me to be at great pains to discover the opinions of the readership.

Mr Rogers remembers being persecuted for daring to speak out against the *Cult of Vertigo*. But I saw the argument moving from his initial statement that Vertigo is just a symbol on the top of a book, to whether it was necessary to further subdivide the imprint into Visions, Voices and the forthcoming Verite. On this point there was much debate, reaching a consensus that the Vertigo ident alone was enough to clue readers in that it may be of interest.

The point which Mr Rogers seems to have missed is that Vertigo is designed to appeal to people who don't normally buy comics, or only the odd one. These casual readers don't get **Comics International** (heaven forbid!).

They don't know what is available, and they probably won't ask. They definitely won't just pick up a comic at random and buy it in the hope it is to their taste, there are too many on the racks to do that any more. The Vertigo imprint is for the people who buy just **The Sandman**, **Shade** or **Swamp Thing**. It's to tell them that there are other titles out there which they might like. They never said that if you like one Vertigo book, you'll like them all. That would be stupid considering the diversity of talents they employ. Vertigo may have been born from the DC super-natural horror books but they are diversifying into other genres. Take **Sandman Mystery Theatre**, **Jonah Hex**, **Millennium Fever**, **Preacher**, **Invisibles** and **Books of Magic** as examples. There's a lot more diversity within that handful than you'll find in most publishers' core lines, and you couldn't accuse any of the creators of working to a house style.

Mr Rogers complains that he did not get to say his piece, but at such events, who does? Anyway, a lot of his points were made by others. Several people said that they buy comics based on the creator, not the publisher. As for the creators saying how cool it was working for Vertigo; nothing like that was said, but let's face it, Vertigo is the coolest imprint in comics. If I told someone I wrote comics, do you think they'd be more impressed with **Ant-Man 2099** or **Sandman**?

The perception of Vertigo is that it is experimental storytelling at the cutting edge, and that's cool. Sometimes it falls short and is derivative, or goes too far and becomes unreadable, but at least it tries to avoid superheroes, which is the key to expanding the comics audience.

I agree about the strange quirk that a lot of comics readers fall into, by saying 'I only read...' and 'I won't read...'. But it happens in the book world too, with those who only read science fiction or fantasy. There are so many books in these genres that they need never be short of reading material even within these constraints. It must be in the nature of the compulsive, or the unadventurous.

You don't see anyone saying I only read Wilbur Smith or Tom Clancy, do you? As with books, the majority of comics purchasers pick and choose their reading.

Finally, why attack the audience for being Vertigo fans? Who else does he think would go to a Vertigo panel? Just because he feels that he was short changed is no reason to go telling tales to Dez.

He's got better things to do, like jumping out of planes 'n' stuff!

The nightmare begins

Comment by Colin Sharpe, Oakham, Leics

I HEARD the news only the other day. It must have broken after **Comics International** #62 went to press. Details are sketchy, but the intent is there.

The beginning of the end has

arrived. The end of comic books as we know it. The worse case scenario becomes reality.

... Image is being unleashed on Marvel Comics!

Comics ain't what they used to be, that's for sure, but comics surely have never been in dodgier hands than they are at present.

Face facts, people: DC isn't cutting the ice. Both its big guns have barrel rust. But Marvel has been subtly reinventing itself for the last ten years. The rest of the pretenders have all got elements of times when comics were great. Basically, comics are in the shitter!

Now before anyone starts shouting out names like **The Incredible Hulk, Starman, The Maxx**, or any other critically acclaimed comic, these are just the flies on the shit. When shit is fresh it attracts loads of flies. As it loses its vitality only a few remain. Shit = the comics industry.

Image produces comics for children (and some sad adults) with hyperfunctional testosterone glands. They had, arguably, the best artists working on the lamest imitations, with the saddest scripts.

Nowadays, they are just another comic company, one that predominantly produces wank books, although they do have a few half-hearted flies circling them.

So I just can't believe it! I can't believe that someone upstairs at Marvel had the brilliant idea that giving Rob Liefeld its superheroes was going to improve Marvel's plummetting stock.

If it was spring, I'd be searching for April 1st. Except this is a sick joke. It would be sick even if Jim Lee got the franchise.

For all of Marvel's faults, they have always been there (in my lifetime) and this corporate machine with insufficient brains to hit a donkey's arse with a banjo thinks that by finally admitting that creators are bigger than characters, they can "sell" the characters to the creators who are probably the reason this industry is in the mess it is.

Ye Gods! Stan (if he were dead) would be and Jack probably is turning in their graves!

What next... Well, **Spider-Man** and the **X-Men** must be safe. After all, they are Marvel Comics, the rest just clutters up the office: "Yeah, the **Hulk** sells a few copies, but you've got to make the deal sweet. These Image guys aren't going to want all turkey. Yeah, so Peter David gets canned, we don't like his opinionated columns anyhow!" It's going to have been said, you mark my words.

Peter David will be rationally howling at the top of his lungs how he's just become another victim of the comic revelation.

Is it all worth it? Is it worth sticking around for **The Fantastic Four** by Eric Stephenson, Chap Yaep and Jonathon Sibal III; or **The Incredible Hulk** by Erik Larsen; or **The Avengers** by Rob Liefeld? I think not.

Goodbye, bygone days. Now is the time to grow up. Stuff all those comics in a box and hide them away in the loft. It's over.

The Sandman has finished, the nightmare is just beginning.

Comics International: Stay rational. Reports the facts. And don't let the bastards grind you down.

What if... ?
A comicbook fairy tale

Comment by Alan Woollcombe, Kingston, Surrey

ONCE upon a time there was a comics company - let's call him M. When he started out in the late 1930s, he went under another name, but that's another story.

M quickly achieved popular success with his adventures of patriotic heroes beating the tar out of the ratzis and Tojo (as they dubbed their Axis foes). But when the Cold War replaced the Second World War, his fortunes changed. Despite chasing after every fashion going (horror, mystery, romance, crime, westerns...) and changing his name twice, M fell into a fifteen year decline.

Pretty soon there was only Stan, the office junior, left and even he was on the brink of leaving when he had one last desperate idea: he and Jack the artist would produce adventures of heroes with personal problems - problems like spider bites, gamma radiation, dead sidekicks, that sort of thing.

It was a stroke of genius: Stan and Jack's adventures were a massive hit. Soon M was the toast of the town, loved by all (except his rivals) and he moved into a bigger house. M developed airs and graces, calling his adventures "Pop Art Productions" and then a "Super-Hero Universe."

There was even a clutch of mutants in the back room, although a good dose of low sales saw them off for quite a while!

After several years Stan retired and Jack left in a huff, but there were others to take their place, and M continued to prosper, even buying a house in London to produce more adventures.

Then M began to feel unloved.

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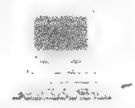
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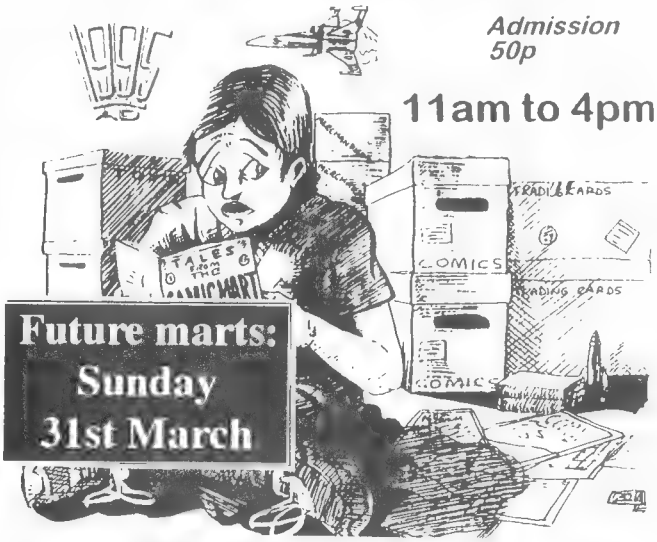

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He found the tallest writer around and made him Editor-in-Chief and stuck his name all over the adventures, just like Stan had done (except Stan used to write them and the Tall Guy only looked at them).

The Tall Guy thought M needed a boost, so for the 25th birthday party of the Super-Hero Universe he came up with a new universe (with real personal problems).

Unfortunately, although M liked it, nobody else did. M felt even more dejected.

Then the Tall Guy came up with a future universe (with future personal problems) which quite a lot of people liked. But still M felt unloved.

The mutants in the back room had overrun the place and were out of control. The house in London had proved a bad investment, so M moved out, just leaving a photo-copier in the garden shed in case of emergencies.

A bunch of artists had quit and set up in opposition, and people were continually criticising M's adventures, although they still bought them.

M blamed the postman for all the bad news, so he got his own. But this one was worse, he would often forget about delivering abroad. Sales dropped.

Then M started seeing double: where once there had been one hero, now he would see two, each with half the sales. He was getting an attack of the accountants and was too weak to fight it off.

Ill, he sacked a load of editors, subdivided the offices, bought a rival universe, played swapsies with his main rivals. But all to no avail. His migraine grew worse. What could he do?

Then, in his feverish state, he had another idea: he would rent out bits of his universe. *That* would teach them all...

To be continued..?

1995: a year in retrospect

Comment by Cory MaCrae, Dennistoun, Glasgow

WHAT a year it's been! As I write it's late October and the weather is beginning to turn nasty. It seems about the right time for an ex-retailer to take a look at what has happened that has made the year that much tougher than any other in recent memory.

Marvel ended off 1994 by buying Heroes World Distribution, a company that (by all accounts) never actually amounted to much in the cutthroat world of the comic distributor. All of us "in the know" began to shake in our boots at the growth of Marvel into an area that had for many years been a no-go area for comic publishers. Marvel had made a huge purchase earlier when Malibu came into the fold.

Stories of editors desperately trying to save their jobs filtered through and artists and writers made known their concerns. These concerns turned out to be valid as Malibu now no longer actually has an image of its own and it won't be long I think before Marvel close the book once and for all on the company that was Malibu.

So when Marvel bought out Heroes World why did we worry? It had long been felt that Marvel was looking for the excuse to get into distribution and take a more direct control over the spread that they achieved through the market that had faithfully supported them.

As a retailer at the time I felt that it was a portent of doom. So when the announcement came, it only had the effect of saddening me somewhat, like someone telling me that a great friend was very ill. Prior to this I, as a partner of AKA Books and Comics, had been in court trying to come to some way to pay Titan off the money that we owed them. Titan had showed us the red card and it was not long before the men in suits came to the door with the order to close down.

It is a strange coincidence that Titan got heavy when Marvel purchased Malibu. They maybe had the misgivings about the situation that were not to occur to me until much later.

Then three weeks or so later, Titan itself closed down.

1995 has been a hard year for retailers in particular. DC followed Marvel down the "exclusive" road. They had the opportunity to support the industry as a whole but you get the feeling that this would have put them in a very bad position and the industry cannot afford to lose someone like DC.

This had the effect of putting everyone on a sticky wicket with Diamond in between a rock and a hard place. Thankfully Diamond must have been aware they needed the business too badly to adopt the high moral stance too often.

Stateside Comics folded on a regular basis! I used to sit back and be amazed at the situation that unfolded before us.

Diamond supported Stateside when any sane distributor would have shown them the door. Go and look up some of their accounts for that year and you will see some of the most incredible (legal) redistribution of funds ever. The second company set up with exactly the same stock and immediately pursued their old standing order

customers. Many of these had paid handsome deposits that the old Stateside had no obligation to fill.

What's the new deal? Don't ask me to comment. I have had enough of court cases to last me a lifetime. Suffice to say that I don't think such a company would get the same treatment in the new distribution network, at least I hope not.

Independent shops are being battered by rising costs. Apparently paper costs have risen, but by 45 cents per comic? I don't think so. Marvel have increased the price to the UK claiming that shipping costs etc., etc., blah, blah. It's strange that Diamond and Titan managed it in the past even with an extra link in the chain that Heroes World UK doesn't have. Who's making the profits these days?

Capital Distribution sent one person to UKCAC this year. They have Kitchen Sink to keep them warm this winter. DC came and grumbled about Marvel. Fleetway felt that the journey down the road wasn't worth it and the editors came to see their freelancers.

Marvel, despite having caused the uproar and strife, couldn't be bothered to take a stall and face the punters wanting to know why the comics have gone up. Manga came and looked despondent. Wizards of the Coast came and played Magic at their stall.

And people wonder why the Brits have a reputation for sitting in the bar getting drunk and telling stories about the good old days?

The freelance world struggles on. A lot of doors have been closed to the average writer or artist trying to score big on the work front. That old bastion of freelance heaven, Fleetway, has been battered by poorer sales than they would like and are coming at things with the "we know what we like and we buy only what we like" attitude. It's not their fault. Not as many people like buying their stuff as in the "good of days". Pass me a pint.

Caliber offer a deal to freelancers that consists of you doing the work, them publishing it and then you might get paid, if they make sufficient profit.

My point is that it doesn't give the average freelancer a wage to rely on. We've got to wonder how much talent is being wasted due to companies' financial constraints.

In my home town of Glasgow I would like to delude myself that we were rocked by the closure of AKA. I certainly was! But any void soon filled as a new shop set up on its grave. Indeed one of the partners, John McShane, still works there. I take some solace in knowing that our business didn't go in the direction that Titan/Diamond wanted it to, to Forbidden Planet.

We lost our convention. It must have been hard for Frank Plowright to close down the convention that he set up in the town where he lives.

Oh well, he is jumping out of a plane for Knockabout and their case against customs as punishment. For anyone who has seen Frank or knows him this will bring a mental picture so strange as to momentarily freeze the brain! There is to be a new convention next year, and I hope that many southerners will make the trek north as it looks like being a doozy.

The "Scottish Cartoon and Comic Artists Membership" (SCCAM) set up this year and so far nigh on one hundred people have passed a tenner in as membership fees. We had the blessing of Will Eisner and he joined us one night to accept his Presidency. All Scottish comic sorts should come along. The rest of Scotland holds together.

So what kind or year should we expect for 1996? Well if we expect anything we will get dumped on again. We have to get out there and make next year a great year. It really is down to us.

The industry has been shredded and a new one put in its place. If we fail, then the blame is on our heads as the potential to rebuild is there and we have to take it. Will it be a good year? I, for one, hope so.

More than just superheroes

Comment by F. P. Barbieri, Leyton, London

THE comics artform, which we love, did not start with superheroes. It does not end with superheroes. But fandom did.

It's hardly an exaggeration to say that we are *all* superhero fans. Fandom as a social group, not only in America, but even in Britain, is formed around American, and specifically Marvel superheroes (the prominence of US super-heroes in **Comics International** tells its own story).

Now, these are emphatically *not* the most popular comics in Britain, America, or anywhere: for every American who reads **X-Men**, twenty read **Peanuts** or **Calvin and Hobbes**. The difference is that the **Peanuts** reader rarely wants to get beyond his daily newspaper strip.

He has no interest in comics as a whole. For varied reasons, the comparatively minor superhero genre is better at getting people involved in comics as such, to point beyond single authors and

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single strips. So readers who first gain an interest in comics through super-heroes often find themselves going on to things they hadn't expected.

Their very love for comics leads them on - as Mike Kidson said: "If it's a comic I'll read it!" (**Comics International** #60). And as their knowledge of the artform grows, so their critical faculties develop; the same pleasure that makes them fans makes them critics. This is why most articulate fans, the kind who write for **Comics International** and so on, read other things beside superheroes.

Human nature being what it is, however, a different breed of reader also develops: timid, reactionary, seeking in his favourite genre not aesthetic pleasure and new experience, but a refuge from reality.

To such readers non-superhero comics are a *threat*. Incredibly, they want discussion of all comics bar what they call superhero driven from the field. (A secondary type of the same breed is the kind who, having got deeply into "alternative" comics, affects to despise or hate superheroes. These groups have in common their Philistine habit of condemning whole genres.)

These people will obviously remain ignorant of everything outside what they call superhero; it is what they don't know that they reject. Uncritical followers of mass habit and economic power within the artform, they know nothing of superheroes as a genre, only of the most widely distributed titles, and want to hear nothing more.

By the same token, they are less likely to become fan writers and critics. They want to receive, and to receive more and more of the same, rather than give.

When they do bubble out of their armchairs their ignorance is colossal.

Every single statement of fact that Alex Thomas made about me in **Comics International** #62 is false, and he could have found out it was false by the simplest of checks. But what he wanted was not to find anything out, but to confirm his cliche of the superhero-hating "alternative" merchant. That I am nothing like his cliche is irrelevant; his bigotry needed public expression.

This kind of persons's ultimate argument is "there are more of us (superhero fans) than you (alternative fans)". This is invalid on not one but three counts.

First, "we" are superhero fans too. Second, "you" don't speak for the majority of young fans, who don't know alternative comics because they haven't had a chance to find out.

And third, the argument from numbers is pathetic. No amount of heads counted could ever make a false view true; anyone who feels otherwise has a better title than I have to the description that the wretched Thomas saw fit to use about me... fascist.

An abstraction of the comics medium

Comment by David Gentle, Romsey, Hants

WHAT is a medium? It can be defined in several ways. A point between two extremes, a person who communicates with the dead (and passes the information to the living), but the most often used definition, outside of maths, is that of a means of diffusing information such as newspapers or television. If we take the latter example as our definition it should be possible to devise a way of gauging the theoretical effectiveness of a medium.

One possible measure would be the degree of abstraction from the original form since this would tell us how ambiguous any medium is.

As an example allow me to compare literature to comics. Since the basic form of books is in words and comics is in pictures then we should attempt to find out which is the most abstract.

Consider a drawing of a pig and the word "pig". The picture is an abstract representation of the visual appearance of a pig. It is a single abstraction. In our phonetic alphabet the written word is an abstract representation of sounds. These sounds are an abstract representation of the pig.

Words therefore are twice as abstract as pictures. Comics are less abstract than books. Of course comics use words as well, but this is a reflection of the major shortcoming of comics. They have no sound.

Question: Why are comics given less respect than books or films?

Answer: There are three reasons. The first is that in mainstream culture anyone can reel off a list of "classic" films or books that are regarded as particularly effective examples of the genre. Of all the books that have ever been written and of all the films that have ever been made, only a tiny percentage are lauded as classics, and continually available to the public. In any comic shop you can find boxes full of old comics. None of these are classics, but they are on the wall in mylar bags with huge prices attached to them.

The second reason is the exposure. Anybody who reads comics has, at some point, been exposed to a comic that interested them.

The reason that in the past comics readers rarely continued with the hobby into their teenage years and beyond is that there was no material that would appeal to teenagers and adults. This has changed but you wouldn't know it if you only read newspapers and watch TV.

The third reason is subject matter. Try explaining your favourite comic to someone not aware of comics. If it's a superhero comic then it isn't credible. If it's science fiction then it isn't credible. If it's the autobiography of some guy in America it isn't relevant.

My own favourite comic is **Cerebus**. Whether you like it or not (or have even heard of it) it is hard to deny that one guy taking 25 years of his life to complete one story is pretty impressive. Now try telling this to a non-comics reader. I doubt you'll get beyond "it's about a talking aardvark".

Of course there is a fair amount of implausibility in the mainstream. It's impossible to draw a gun effectively from the hip in the way they do in every cowboy film, and nobody ever had shoot outs in the classic way, but this isn't the same as a bloke in tights flying through the air.

This issue suggests another question to me: Why do we all accept this implausible stuff without question?

Answer: Comics are more effective at creating a suspension of disbelief than films and are more visual than books.

If in a film you want to create a gigantic purple spacecraft then you either get somebody to go to the trouble of building a model of it or you get a 3D raytracing package like Lightwave and you make it with that. In both cases the audience is asking, "How did they create such a realistic looking spacecraft?" Or, "How did they make that building explode?".

Stunts and special effects in films create a wow factor because it must have been difficult to stage.

In a comic, an exploding building or a spacecraft is done exactly the same way as say an apple or an unexploded building. In a comic, therefore, there is no wow factor to distract you from what's happening.

If you want to describe a gigantic purple spacecraft in a book then you just write "gigantic purple spacecraft". Which may not seem different to writing "apple" but everyone knows what an apple looks like, which is not the case with a spacecraft.

How, after all this, can we get anybody else to realise that comics are good? I think recent efforts to get some comics recognised as high culture are doomed to failure because the people who define high culture consider comics to be the definition of low culture. Just being a comic dooms any story to being considered low brow, no matter how good it is.

My own favoured solution is to try to get a wide variety of comics into the classroom.

That way everyone can find subject matter they like in comics in the same way they do with books or television.

Comment submissions

Please note:

Okay, enough's enough. As we end the year, let's also end the squabbling. *Comment* has always been intended to offer a soapbox for readers' views. But on comics... not each other. A bit of "peace on earth, good will to all" would be appreciated, both by the staff and the general readership, no doubt! Right of reply is one thing, but some of you have been getting out of hand. In future, no personal digs. Debate about opinions published or new comics-related subjects is all we'll be running. You have been warned. *...Dez Skinn/Editor*

PUBLISHER index

IN ANSWER to continual requests for details concerning comics publishers, the ***Comics International*** *Publisher's Index covers all major newsstand and direct sale mainstream comics publishers. For information about small press titles, readers are refered to the Announcements section of our classified listings at the end of each issue.*

US PUBLISHERS

While not exhaustive, the following are the major American comics publishers:

■ **ARCHIE COMIC PUBLICATIONS**, 325 Fayette Ave., Mamaroneck, NY 10543 (humour titles) 001 914 381 5155

■ **AARDVARK-VANAHEIM**, PO Box 1674 Station C, Kitchner, Ontario N2G 4R2 Canada. (Cerebus)

■ **AC COMICS**, PO Box 1216, Longwood, Fl 32752 (adventure & western titles)

■ **BONGO ENTERTAINMENT** 1999 Ave of the Stars, Los Angeles, Ca 90607 (Simpsons-related humour titles) 001 310 788 1367

■ **BROADWAY COMICS**, 1285 Ave of the Americas, 35th Floor, NY, NY 10016 (adventure) 001 212 554 4588

■ **CALIBER PRESS** *now at* 11904 Farmington Rd., Livonia, Mi 48150 (b&w adventure titles) 001 313 425 7930

■ **DARK HORSE COMICS**, 10956 S. E. Main St., Milwaukie, Or 97222 (adventure, licensed & manga) 001 503 652 8815

■ **DC COMICS** *now at* 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019 (adventure, plus licensed, humour, Vertigo & Paradox Press imprints) 001 212 636 5400

■ **DISNEY COMICS**, 500 S Buena Vista St, Burbank, Ca 91521 (humour titles) 001 818 507 5739

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■ **KITCHEN SINK PRESS**, 320 Riverside Drive, Northampton, Mass 01060 (adventure, humour & licensed, inc Tundra) 001 413 586 9525

■ **LAST GASP**, 777 Florida, San Francisco, Ca 94110 (underground) 001 415 824 6636

■ **MALIBU COMICS Entertainment**, 26707 W. Agoura Rd., Calabasas, Ca 91302 (adventure, licensed + Bravura titles) 001 818 878 7400

■ **MARVEL Entertainment Group**, 387 Park Ave S, New York, NY 10016 (adventure, some humour & licensed) 001 212 696 0808

■ **MILESTONE MEDIA**, 119 West 23rd St., Suite 409, New York, NY 10011 (adventure titles) 001 212 522 7150

■ **MIRAGE PUBLICATIONS**, PO Box 486, Northampton, Ma 01061 (humour)

■ **NBM PUBLICATIONS**, 185 Madison Ave, Suite 1502, New York, NY 10016 (adult fantasy graphic novels)

■ **NOW COMICS**, 60 Revere Drive, Northbrook, Ill 60062 (licensed adventure & humour titles) 001 708 205 2950

■ **REBEL STUDIOS**, 4716 Judy Court, Sacramento, Ca 95841. (adventure b&w titles) 001 916 443 7629

■ **RIP OFF PRESS**, PO Box 4686, Auburn, Ca 95604 (underground comix)

■ **SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS**, 979 S. Bascom Ave, San Jose, Ca 95128 (fantasy b&w) 001 408 279 0451

■ **TEKNO COMIX**, 2255 Glades Road, Suite 237W, Boca Raton, Fl 33431-7383 (s-f/fantasy comics) 001 407 998 800

■ **TOPPS COMICS**, 254 36th St., Brooklyn, NY 11232 (adventure titles)

■ **VALIANT/VOYAGER Communications**, 275 7th Ave, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10001 (adventure) 001 212 366 4900

■ **VIZ COMICS**, PO Box 77010, San Francisco, Ca 94107 (translated manga titles)

■ **WaRP GRAPHICS**, 43 Haight Ave, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603 (Elquest titles) 001 914 473 9277

UK PUBLISHERS

While not exhaustive, the following are the major UK comics and graphic novel publishers:

■ **BOXTREE BOOKS**, 2nd Floor, Broadwall House, 21 Broadwall, London SE1 (licensed graphic novels) 0171 928 9696

■ **DC THOMSON**, Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ (humour & girls' titles)

■ **DEADLINE Publications**, 36 Leroy Street, London SE1 4SR (**Deadline** anthology) 0171 232 2840

■ **FANNY**, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (women's comics) 0181 969 2945

■ **FLEETWAY EDITIONS**, 25-31 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SU (adventure, humour, licensed) 0171 344 6400

■ **JOHN BROWN PUBLISHING**, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, Fulham, London SW6 (Viz) 0171 381 6007

■ **KNOCKABOUT COMICS**, 10 Acklam Rd, London W10 5QZ (humour & underground comix, graphic novels) 0181 969 2945

■ **MANDARIN BOOKS**, Reed Consumer Books, Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, London SW3 (licensed grahic novels) 0171 581 9393

■ **MANGA PUBLISHING**, 40 St Peter's Rd, Loncon W6 9BD (licensed titles) 0181 748 9000

■ **MARVEL COMICS (UK)**, Arundel House, 13-15 Arundel Street, London WC2R 3DX (humour, adventure, licensed) 0171 208 4500

■ **THE REDAN COMPANY**, Appleton House, 139 King Street, London W6 9JG (pre-school humour titles) 0181 563 1563

■ **SAVOY BOOKS**, 279 Deansgate, Manchester M3 4EW (adult fantasy titles) 0161 833 2664

■ **TITAN BOOKS**, 42-44 Dolben Street, London SE1 OUP (licensed graphic novels & magazines) 0171 620 0200

NEW **TOWER MAGAZINES**, City Harbour, London E14 9GL (licensed new titles) 0171 987 5090

■ **VICTOR GOLLANCZ**, Cassell PLC, Wellington House, 125 Strand, London WC2R 0BB (original graphic novels) 0171 420 5555

RETAIL index

Key to abbreviations used

imp	= air imported new issues
back	= back issues stocked
s-p	= small press & fanzines
merch	= videos, trading cards, T-shirts, posters, models, etc
Ind	= US independent comics (non-newsstand & manga)
Brit	= British comics & albums
frgn	= foreign language comics
u/g	= underground comics
gn	= graphic novels & trade paperback editions
STO	= standing order service, (new comics reserved)
RPG	= role playing games

CENTRAL LONDON

■ **Acme Comic Shop**, 391 Coldharbour Lane, London SW9 8LQ (near Brixton tube) Mon-Thur 10-6; Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-6.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, wants lists welcomed) 0171-274 6697

■ **Adventure into Comics Inc**, 309 Railton Road, Herne Hill, London SE24 0JN. Mon-Sat (closed Wed) 11-6. (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, STO, collectable toys) 0171 346 0020

■ **Avalon Comics**, 143 Lavender Hill, London SW11. Mon-Thur 10.00-5.45, Fri 10.00-6.30; Sat 9.30-6.00; Sun 11.00-4.00 (imp, back, ind, Brit, gn, STO) 0171-924 3609

■ **Comic Showcase**, 76 Neal St, London WC2. Mon - Wed 10-6; Thurs - Sat 10-7; Sun 12-5 (imp, back s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, cartoon books, original art) 0171-240 3664

NEW **Epic**, 4 Marlborough Court, (off Carnaby Street), London W1 1PS. Mon-Sat 10.30 - 7.00. (back, merch, Brit, u/g) 0171 434 0390

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 71 New Oxford St, London WC1A 1DG. Mon-Wed & Sat 10-6; Thurs & Fri 10-7 (imp, back s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, film & tv) 0171 836 4179

■ **Gosh!** 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1 (opposite British Museum) 10-6 7 days a week inc Bank Hols. Late Thur-Fri til 7 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, largest selection of newspaper strip compilations in UK) 0171 636 1011

■ **Graphically Speaking**, 120 Holloway Road, London N7. Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat 11-6, Thur 11-7, Sun 12-5 (imp, back, merch, gn, ind, STO) 0171 607 7297

■ **Mega-City Comics**, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Sun 10-6; late Thurs + Fri to 7. (imp, back, merch, s-p, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, film-tv fantasy, horror, body art, subculture, STO) 0171 485 9320

■ **Platinum Age Comics/Bayswater Books**, 27a Craven Terrace, Lancaster Gate, London W2 3EL. Mon-Sun 11-7 (but sometimes till midnight!) (back, ind, u/g, general 2nd hand books, search service) 0171 402 7398

OUTER LONDON

■ **Altered Images** *IS NOW AT* 3 Eagle Star House, 299-301 High St, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Mon-Wed & Fri 10- 5.30; Thurs 10 - 6.30; Sat 9 - 6 (imp, back, ind merch, Brit, gn, STO) 0181 770 3815

■ **Archive Collections**, 37 High Street, Orpington, Kent BR6 0JE. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs 10-2; Fri 10-6; Sat 9-6; Sun 10-1 (imp, back merch ind Brit gn STO) 01689 824489

■ **Atomic Comics**, 1112 High Rd, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Sat 10 -6 excl Fri 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, 2nd hand horror fantasy sf bks, original art) 0181-597 8547

■ **Blue Silver Comics**, 32 Northfield Ave, West Ealing, London W13 9RL. Mon-Wed 11-6.30; Thur-Fri 11-7; Sat 10-6; Sun 11-4. (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO) 0181 840 9446

■ **Book Gallery: The Illustrated Book Shop**, 11-17 Stockwell St, Greenwich, London SE10 9JN. Tues-Fri 10-6, Sat & Sun 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, ind, gn, u/g, 2nd hand & new SF-horror-fantasy bks, art bks, bargain bks, remainders, art prints) 0181 853 2151

■ **Calamity Comics**, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6, Thurs & Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, fantasy tv & film bks & merch, Sega & Nintendo game cartridges, videos) 0181-427 3831

■ **Comicana**, 125 East Barnet Rd, Barnet, Herts EN4 8RF. Mon-Wed 10-7; Thur-Fri 10-8; Sat 9-6; Sun 10-3 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, Brit, tv-film & fantasy, gn, STO) 0181-449 5535

■ **The Comic Collector**, 252d High St, Bromley, Kent BR1 1PG. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 9-6 (imp, back, ind, Brit, gn, STO, merch) 0181 466 7988

■ **Comic Mania**, Unit 35, In-Shops (opposite police station), High Street, Wealdstone, Middlesex HA3 5DE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO) 0181 427 2090

■ **Comic Shack**, 720 High Rd, Leytonstone, London E11 3NN. Mon-Thurs 9.30- 5.30; Fri & Sat 9.30-6.30; Sun 11-5. Also by appointment (imp. back, s-p, merch, u/g, gn, hbks) 0181-539 7260/0181-555 9303 (eve)

■ **Dynamic Store!** Units 2-3 Keeley House, 22/30 Keeley Road, Croydon, Surrey. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 6.00; Sun: please phone. (imp, back, Brit, s-p, ind, u/g, gn, STO, RPG, merch) 0181-681 2597

■ **Edge of Forever, The**, 82 b Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7LW. Mon-Fri 9.30-6.00; Sat 9-6 (imp, back, s-p merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO) 0181-298 1363

■ **MTCC Trading Cards**, 43 Sidcup Hill, Sidcup, Kent DA14 6HJ. Mon-Sat 8-6; Sun 2-4 (trading cards, merch, memorabilia; Trek-Disney-fantasy-etc) 0181 302 3020

■ **Readers Dream**, 100A Harlington Road West, Feltham (near Heathrow airport) Middx TW14 0JJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6.00 excl Wed - closed (imp, back, gn, STO) 0181-844 0780

■ **Skinny Melink's**, 66 Loampit Vale, Lewisham, London SE13. Mon-Sat 10-7; Sun 11-6 (imp, back, ind s-p, u/g, gn, STO) 0181-318 0499

■ **They Walk Among Us**, 32 Union Court, Sheen Rd, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1AA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 excl Fri 9.30-6 (imp, merch, back, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, fantasy/s-f/horror bks, STO, sub-culture) Phone/fax 0181 948 8476

■ **30th Century Comics**, Unit 5, Putney Market (1st Floor), Putney Exchange Shopping Centre, Putney High Street, London SW15 1TW. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, gn, STO, film & tv, fantasy/horror/sf bks) 0181 788 2052

■ **Time Trek**, 46 High Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1TR. Mon - Sat 9 - 5.30 (late Thurs to 8) (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, sf TV & film related merch, STO) 0181 313 0677

■ **Universal Comics**, 5 Bell Parade Bell Rd, Hounslow TW3 3NS. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, STO) 0181 814 0557

■ **Westside Comics**, 392 Uxbridge Road, Hayes, Middlesex UB4 0EL. Mon-Fri 11.00-6.00, Sat 10.00-6.00 (imp, back, ind, Brit, gn, STO). 0181-813 5019

SOUTH EAST

■ **ACE Comics**, 1 Headgate Buildings, St John's St, Colchester, Essex C02 7AD. Mon -Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, u/g, Brit, ind gn STO RPG, rock t-shirts) 01206 561912

■ **The American Comic Shop**, 1 Church Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BS (just off High St). Mon-Thurs 10-5.30, Fri 9.30-6.00, Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, gn, STO, merch, Trek & Star Wars merch, manga, videos) 01634 817410

■ **Andy's Comic Cavern**, Windsor Open Market (back of Woolworth's), Bachelors Acre, Windsor. Saturdays only 7.30-4.00 (imp, back, ind, gn, STO) Free delivery for Windsor & Slough area. 01753 621978

■ **Calamity Comics 2**, 90 Queens Road, The Broadway, Watford, Herts WD1 2LA. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; closed Wed; Thurs & Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, fantasy tv & film bks & merch, videos) 01923 249293

■ **Cartoon Shop**, 22 Southernhay, Town Centre, Basildon, Essex SS14 1EL. Mon - Wed & Sat 10-6, Thurs & Fri 10-8 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, RPG) 01268 534194

■ **Cartoon Shop**, 368 Chartwell West, Top Floor, Victoria Circus Shopping Centre, Southend-on-Sea, Essex. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, RPG) 01702 613021

■ **Central City Comics**, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, frgn, gn, STO) 01473 233017

■ **Comic Showcase**, 19-20 St Clements St, Oxford. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, gn, STO) 01865-723680

■ **David's Comics**, 3 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Fri 9.30-6; Sat 9-6. (imp, back, ind, u/g, Brit, STO, gn, exchange, club discount) 01273 690223

■ **Fantastic Store Ink**, 14 Gardner Street, Brighton BN1 1UP. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-6. (imp, back, ind, s-p, merch, Brit, u/g, STO, original art) 01273 670012

■ **Incognito Comic Shop**, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, Brit, STO, film/tv merch) phone/fax: 01227 785898

■ **Incognito Comic Shop**, 21 Union St, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1EB. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, Brit, STO, film/tv merch) phone/fax: 01622-683642

■ **Renegade Comics**, Unit 11, Elmes Arcade, High St, Stevenage Old Town, Herts SG1 3EF. Mon-Sat 9.00-5.30 (imp back merch s-p ind Brit u/g gn STO RPG) 01438 747468

■ **Reservoir Frogs Comic Shop**, Jubilee Shopping Hall, Gardner St, Brighton BN1 1UN. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO) 01273 202972

■ **Tall Toad Comics**, Amersham Market - every Tues; Hemel Hempstead market - every Wed & Saturday. (imp, back, merch, gn, STO).

■ **Universal Comics**, Unit 27A, Indoor Village Market, High St, Slough SL6 5AG Mon-Sat 9.30-6.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO) 01753 571 799

■ **Universal Comics**, 16 London Road, Staines. Mon-Fri 10.30-6.30, Sat 10-6.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, STO) 01784 460300

■ **Whatever Comics**, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, model kits) 01227 453226

■ **Whatever Comics**, 5 Middle Row, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TF. Mon-Sat 10.00-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, model kits) 01622 681041

■ **Wonderworld**, 133 St Mary Street, Southampton S01 1NX. Tues-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, FRPG & miniatures) 01703 634658

MIDLANDS

Abstract Sprocket, St Benedicts Indoor Market, 21 St Benedicts St, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, ind, s-p, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, STO) 01603 667700

■ **Another World**, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0116 2515266

■ **Another World**, 11 Market Street, Nottingham. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0115 9484122

■ **Arrival Comics & Books**, 2 Broad Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, Brit) 01902-313 660

■ **Bookworm**, 39 Tower St, King's Lynn, Norfolk. Mon-Sat 11-4 (back, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, fantasy & sf, early Penguins, general fic & non-fic, records) 01553 760904/771880

■ **Comics Unlimited**, 4 Clair Court, Lime Street, Bedford MK40 1NH. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, gn, Brit, u/g, STO, RPG) 01234 218984

■ **Comics Unlimited**, 26 Town Centre, Hatfield, Herts AL10 0LD. Wed-Mon 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, RPG) 01707 256788

■ **Comics Unlimited**, Unit 11, The Arcade, Letchworth, Hertfordshire. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, gn, Brit, u/g, STO, RPG) 01462 480018

■ **Demon Comics**, 102 Eastgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1QT. Mon - Sat 10-6. (imp, back, merch, Brit, gn, STO, RPG, t-shirts, sci-fi models) 01452 330370

■ **Fantasy World**, 10 Market Square Arcade, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1NU. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 01782 279294/fax 01782 202381

■ **The Final Frontier**, 29 St Nicholas Place, Leicester LE1 4LD. Mon - Fri 9.30 - 5.30; Sat 9.00 - 5.00. (imp, back, ind, Brit, gn, STO) Established 1984 0116 251 4347

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, film/ tv material, sf/horror bks) ph/fax 01203 229672

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 129 Middle Walk, Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham NG1 7LN. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, film/tv, videos, STO) 0115 958 4706

■ **Ground Zero**, 11 Handley Arcade, Mansfield, Notts NG18 1NQ. Mon - Sat 9.00 - 5.00 (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, STO, accessories) 01623 22017

■ **Mephisto Comics**, 81 Ber Street, Norwich, NR1 3RD. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, merch, gn, ind, s-p, u/g, Brit, STO) 01603 762762

■ **Nostalgia & Comics**, 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon - Thurs 9.15 - 5.45, Fri + Sat 9.15 - 6.00 (imp, back, merch, gn, ind, s-p, u/g, Brit, STO) 0121 643 0143

■ **Page 45**, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6. (imp, back, s-p, ind, Brit, frgn, u/g, gn, STO, indie comix & indie merch specialists, manga) 0115 9508045

NEW **Phoenix Comix**, 43 Kettering Road, Northampton. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.00 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn STO) 01604 602311

■ **Rebel Comics**, 72 Commercial Road, Hereford HR1 2BP. Mon-Sat 10-6. (imp, back, ind, merch, RPG, STO) 01432 358 355

■ **Time Zone**, 12 Fish Street (off Butcher Row), Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 1UR. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 6.00. (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, RPG) 01743 365192

■ **Zoom Comics!!**, Unit 3 Inshops Centre, 65 South Parade, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham B72 1QX Mon-Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, STO) 0121 354 7500

NORTH WEST

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 92 Bold St, Liverpool L1 4HR. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, STO, film/tv material, sf & horror bks) phone/fax: 0151 707 1491

■ **Imagination Station**, Unit 26, Portland Shopping Centre, Botchergate, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 1NT. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, merch, s-p, ind, Brit, gn, STO)

■ **Odyssey 7**, 21 Hanging Ditch, Corn Exchange Buildings, Manchester M4 3ES. Mon -Sat 9.30-5.30. (imp, back, sf-fantasy-horror books, postcards, videos, badges, stills, soundtracks, LF filmbooks, Trek, Doctor Who) 0161 832 7044

■ **Odyssey 7**, Precinct Centre, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9RN. Mon - Sat 9.30am - 5.30pm (imp, back, sf-fantasy-horror novels, postcards, posters, badges, stills, LF film books, Trek, Dr Who, etc) 0161 273 6666

■ **Planet Eater**, 5-7 Union Street Southport, Lancs PR9 0QF Mon - Sat: 9 - 6 Sun: 12-4 (imp, back, merch, model kits, Trek, action figures, STO) 01704 548629

■ **Thunderbooks**, 332 Lytham Rd, Blackpool FY4 1DW. 10-5.30 Mon-Tues Thurs-Sat (& Sundays June-Oct inc.); Wed 1-3.30pm (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, media collectors' items) 01253-348321 fax: 407813

■ **Thunderbooks II**, 116 Friargate, Preston, PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, merch, s-p, ind, Brit, gn, STO, RPG) 01772-204287

■ **Time Zone**, 3 Academy Place, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 2NR. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, RPG) 01925 651185

NEW **William St News**, 12 William St., Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 1LD. Mon-Sat 6am-6pm. (imp, merch, ind, gn, RPG, STO, Brit) 01229 823112

■ **Worlds Apart**, 58-60 Lime St (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6 excl Fri 10-7 (imp, back, ind, merch, s-p, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, fantasy film mags) 0151 707 0839

NORTH EAST

■ **Books N' Comics**, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesborough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, gn, STO, fantasy gn, film mags, Dr Who, Trek) 01642 249143

■ **City Comics**, 120 High St West, Sunderland City Centre, SR1 1TR. Mon-Sat 10-6 excl Wed 10-2 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, frgn, gn, STO, comics bought: cash/credit) 0191 564 0613

■ **Comicville**, Ground Floor, 54 The Arcade, The Piece Hall, Halifax HX1 1RE, Yorkshire. Tues-Fri 9.30-5; Sat 10-5 Sun 11-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, model kits, toys, Who, Trek, videos) 01422 351119

■ **Comicville**, 10 Byram Arcade, Westgate, Hudderfield HD1 1ND. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, model kits, toys, Who, Trek, videos) 01484 455044

■ **Comix USA**, 116 West St., Boston, Lincolnshire. PE21 8QZ (imp, back, ind, merch, gn, STO, limited RPG) 01205 363929

■ **Dells Comic Shop**, 5 Duke St, Bradford 1, Yorks. Mon-Sat 9-5 excl Wed 9-3 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, horror masks, tv fantasy mags) 01274 770 541

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 12 Matilda, off the Moor, Sheffield, Yorks. Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat 9.15-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, original art, model kits, sf & fantasy gns, horror mags, newspaper strip bks) 0114 276 9475

■ **Hysteria Comics**, Unit 2, The Arches, Park Road, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS24 7PH. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, gn, STO, film mags) 01429 236952

■ **Nu.Earth Comics**, 20 Fetter Lane, York Y01 1EH. Mon-Fri 10-7; Sat 9-7; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, STO, RPG, art bks) 01904 611461 (fax: 651453)

■ **Odyssey 7**, 30 Eastgate, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, sf - fantasy - horror bks, posters, postcards, badges, stills, Star Trek, Doctor Who, etc) 0113 242 6325

■ **Sheffield Space Centre**, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield, Yorks. Mon - Sat 10.00 - 5.00 excl Wed. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, gn, STO, Star Trek items) 0114 275 8905

■ **The Last Picture Show**, 40 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thur 10-8, Fri 10-9, Sat 9-7, Sun 12-5. (imp, back, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, RPG, film-rock memorabilia) 0114 256 9604

■ **Travelling Man**, 23 Headingley Lane, Hyde Park Corner, Headingley, Leeds LS6 1BL. Mon-Sat 10.30-5.45 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, RPG, customisable card games) 0113 278 0417

■ **Travelling Man**, Unit 8/9 The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30, Fri-Sat 9-5.30, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, merch, ind, gn, STO, RPG, customisable card games) 0113 242 7227

WEST COUNTRY

■ **American Dream Comics**, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Road, Corsham, Wilts SN13 9BQ. Mon-Thurs 10-5, Fri & Sat 9-6. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, gn, STO, original art, hobby kits, CDs) 01249 701647

■ **Dead Famous**, 72 Walcot St, Bath, Avon BA1 5BD (above Nashers Music Store). Tues-Fri 11-5.30; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, SF-TV-film-rock memorabilia, bks, Wars, Trek, Who, Anderson...) 01225 332298

■ **Floppy Tongue Comics**, 96 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 7QY. Mon-Fri 11.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, gn, STO) 01722 331107

■ **Forbidden Planet**, 30 Penn St., Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Fri 10.00-5.30, Sat 10.00-6.00 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, film & tv, videos, STO) 0117 929 8692

■ **Forever People**, 35 Park Street, Bristol BS1 5NH. Mon-Sat 10.00-6.00 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, u/g, gn, STO, sf/fantasy new & 2nd hand bks, RPG, videos, tv sf memorabilia, sub-culture, body art) 0117 926 5454

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■ **Astounding Comics**, 61 Pyle Street, Newport, Isle of Wight P030 1UL. Mon - Sat 9.30 - 5.30. (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, Brit, gn, STO, RPG, videos) 01983 525320

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■ **Journey into Mystery**, The Emporium, 34 Castle Arcade, Cardiff. Tues - Fri 11.00 - 5.30; Sat 9.00 - 5.30 (imp, back, s-p, ind, u/g, gn, STO, indie records & CDs)

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■ **A1 Books & Comics**, 31-35 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5RJ. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs-Sat 9.30-6.00; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, Brit, gn, STO) 0141 552 6692

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■ **US Comics**: now available in Belfast at **Cardvalue** (Yorkgate), **Newsbeat** (Park Centre) & **Simpsons** (Malone Road). More information 01232 611846 (eves)

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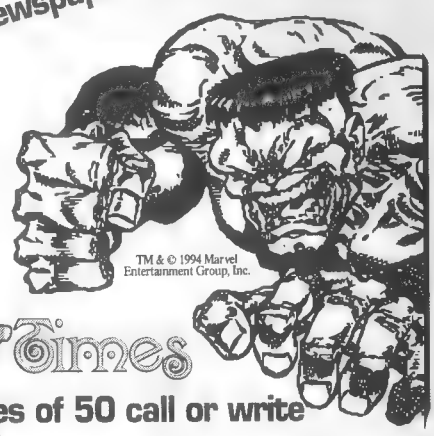

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COMICS ECONOMICS

Back issue comic books are considered by many to be a high-yield low-risk investment. With this awareness, few new comics are genuinely scarce, although low print run launches and key issues introducing new characters who later become popular do keep the interest peaked. With their ever-diminishing quantity, older issues continue to rise, while speculation continues over current trends. As a guide, Comics Economics produces charts compiling current market favourites from US trade titles. *Compiled by Phil Hall*

COLLECTABILITY of comics can be determined by a myriad mix including nostalgia, hero-worship/escapism, violence and fantasy sex. But a key factor for comic fans is potential value — above and beyond the quality of story-telling or art. The "share value" on comics can be increased by any of the above factors (with big-gun violence having recently been eclipsed by the sexual fantasies of "hot babes" comics).

But throughout trends, from content to packaging gimmicks, investment remains king of the collecting market. Key issues, featuring first appearances of characters (or creators), continue to be the most sought-after prizes. In fact, rarity dominates to the point where, ironically, most of the following are considered too valuable to be read. Fortunately, almost all of them have been reprinted.

The collapse of the speculator market led to the bulk of recent back issues dropping in price. But, despite publishers disassociating current editions from the past to attract new readers, the demand for pre-1970 comics continues to grow, especially for scarce high grade copies and low grade reading copies, with mid-grade (VG to FN+) being slow movers.

Top ten US comics of all time

		Near mint price
1	**Action Comics** 1 (1st Superman)	$175,000
2	**Detective Comics** 27 (1st Batman)	$140,000
3	**Superman Comics** 1	$95,000
4	**Marvel Comics** 1	$85.000
5=	**Detective Comics** 1	$65,000
	Flash Comics 1	$65,000
7=	**All-American** 16	$55,000
	Whiz Comics 1 (#2 on cover)	$55,000
9=	**Batman** 1	$50,000
	Captain America Comics 1	$50,000

Top ten Silver Age Marvels

1	**Amazing Fantasy** 15 (1st Spider-Man)	$22,000
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5	**X-Men** 1	$4,800
6	**Journey Into Mystery** 83 (1st Thor)	$3,300
7	**Tales of Suspense** 39 (1st Iron Man)	$2,800
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9	**Tales to Astonish** 27 (1st Ant-Man)	$2,500
10	**Amazing Spider-Man** 2	£2,300

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1	**Showcase** 4 (1st Silver Age Flash app)	$20,000
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4	**Flash** 105 (1st Silver Age issue)	$4,300
5	**Showcase** 22 (1st S/Age Green Lantern)	$4,200
6	**Detective** 225 (1st Martian Manhunter)	$4,000
7	**Adventure** 247 (1st Legion of S-Heroes)	$3,700
8	**Showcase** 6 (1st Challengers of Unknown)	$3,000
9	**Showcase** 9 (1st Lois Lane)	$3,000
10	**Showcase** 13 (3rd Flash)	$2,800

Top ten hot comics

Despite the speculators apparent disappearance from the comics industry in search of new trends, there is still a market for hot new comics. The latest trend of "hot babe" comics has stimulated back issue sales on a number of independent titles. While film and TV spin-off comics have always had a short term appeal for comic fans, the current interest in **The X-Files** perpetuates this speculative aspect. In recent years, it has been the low print run independent titles which have made the most impact. The following chart features the hottest recent comics.

1	**Shi: The Way of the Warrior** 1	Crusade
2	**Lady Death II: Heaven & Hell** 1	Chaos Comics
3	**Gen-13** Vol 2 #1 (variant editions)	Image
4	**The X-Files** 1	Topps
5	**Ash** 1	Event
6	**Vengeance of Vampirella** 1	Harris
7	**Evil Ernie** 1	Chaos
8	**Shi: The Way of the Warrior** 5	Crusade
9	**X-Man** 1	Marvel
10	**Avengelyne** 1	Maximum

Top ten sellers of 1995

1	**The X-Men**	Marvel
2	**Uncanny X-Men**	Marvel
3	**Spawn**	Image
4	**Generation X**	Marvel
5	**Gen-13**	Image
6	**Wolverine**	Marvel
7	**X-Force**	Marvel
8	**Pitt**	Image/Full Bleed
9	**WildC.A.T.s**	Image
10	**Wetworks**	Image

Top ten hot writers

The popularity of an artist has always had a positive effect on the sales and back issue values of comics. During the 1960s, Neal Adams and Jim Steranko dominated. In the Seventies, Barry (Windsor-) Smith, Berni(e) Wrightson and Mike Kaluta were all considered "hot". In the Eighties, Frank Miller, George Perez and John Byrne were among the favourites.

Writers have rarely affected sales, although the 1980s British writers' invasion of US comics has helped balance things. This issue's chart of current favourite writers (not writer/artists — a separate chart is being compiled) is based on figures in several US comic magazines' surveys.

1	Neil Gaiman	**Sandman, Death**
2	Peter David	**Incredible Hulk, Aquaman**
3	Alan Moore	**WildC.A.T.s, From Hell**
4	Chris Claremont	**Sovereign Seven**
5	John Ostrander	**X-Man, The Spectre**
6	James Robinson	**Starman**
7	Mark Waid	**Captain America, Impulse, Flash**
8	Warren Ellis	**Excalibur, Ultraforce**
9	Garth Ennis	**Preacher, Hit-Man**
10	Kurt Busiek	**Astro City, Untold/Spider-Man**

Movers & Shakers hits of '95

Comics International's *Movers & Shakers* column has recommended a number of new titles this year which, according to our ITMite team, have proven popular and/or have sold well during the last 12 months. The following chart shows the column's top spotlighted titles which are now becoming highly sought-after comics.

1	**X-Files**	Topps Comics
2	**Gen 13**	Image Comics
3	**Creed**	Lightning
4	**Generation X**	Marvel Marvel
5	**Vengeance of Vampirella**	Harris Comics
6	**Shi: The Way of the Warrior**	Crusade Publishing
7	**X-Man**	Marvel Comics
8	**Wonder Woman**	DC Comics
9	**Preacher**	DC/Vertigo
10	**Strangers In Paradise**	Abstract Press

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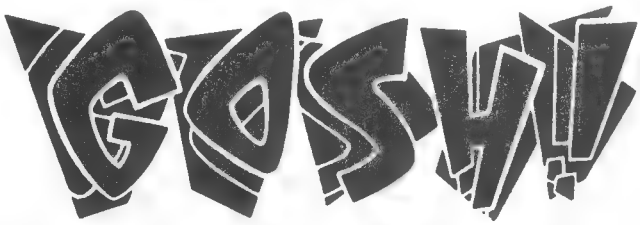

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1.Our budget is big but not infinite, if you want to sell, call now. 2.We are also limiting ourselves to a certain quantity of each title, so please call first to ensure that we're still buying the books you have to sell. 3.It's not always possible to give price quotations over the telephone, especially on large collections or older books. 4.We are unable to buy through the mail, personal callers only please. 5.We may travel to evaluate larger collections. 6. Comics do not have to be in unbroken runs.

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q & a

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Comics International invites you to submit your comics-related queries, both for your own enlightenment, and that of our general readership.

Mark Frostick, The Maltings
Basford, Nottingham

AT A school fete once, I bought a copy of **Wonder Woman**, where she fought some gremlins taking apart aeroplanes with a back-up tale of The Huntress versus some baby sellers. I have since lost the issue but remember that there was a new comic advertised in it called something like Sovereign Seven, but obviously not that.

I think the team had an angel as a leader, a brain that drove a car, a bloke whose skin melted due to taking drugs, and an expert shot. What was this comic called? Was it actually published, as I can't seem to find any copies of anything like that in back issue shops. Is it any good and how much will it cost me if I find it?

And another question: On the '60s *Batman* TV show, who did the title sequence animation. Was it a famous artist?

*My best guess is that you're thinking of a team out of issue one of the DC anthology title that Vertigo supremo Karen Berger cut her teeth on: **New Talent Showcase**. It had some pretty funky characters who nobody remembers. But other than that wild guess (guaranteed to once again get me innundated with more informed letters telling me off over the coming few weeks) no idea.*

*If anybody wants to admit owning the **Wonder Woman** you're referring to (which is issue #311, January 1984), perhaps they can drop us a line.*

As for the animation sequence at the start of Batman, have you ever considered taping the show and looking at the credits? Dez

Colin Brown
29 Stoneybank Court,
Musselburgh

WHILE not wishing to turn this column into the comics version of the *Antiques Roadshow*, can you tell me if **Watchmen** products are worth anything these days?

In particular, the badge set, "smiley" badge, portfolio and hardback leatherbound collection, with slipcase?

My sister says she was once offered £20 for her "smiley" badge, by a barman, but I reckon the he, she or both of them must have been rather the worse for wear through over-indulgence.

Slipcase editions currently sell for around £50, signed ones are about £65. Smiley badges... there are at least three different ones. The original pre-Watchmen '67 ones, from the San Francisco "Summer of Love" period are actually worth at least what your sister was offered, but you need to look at the back of the badge to distinguish an original from a counterfeit. The real McCoy has a brown card back, whereas more recent ones have plastic or metal backs. The 1980s Watchmen tweaked version, with the blood-splat can still be picked up for around £5. Dez

Chris Harper, 25 Napier Drive
Tipton, West Midlands

AT THE risk of rendering my question in issue 61 (regarding the reduction in comic art size to half-up) somewhat redundant by answering it myself, I decided to dust off those old comic books and take a look.

I've never noticed a sudden, dramatic change in the look of the art, and I'd never actually looked closely for subtle changes until you mentioned it. Having now done so... I *think* the changeover to smaller pages (Marvel books) was on all titles cover-dated November 1967. For Jack Kirby fans this means **Tales of Suspense** 95, **Fantastic Four** 68 and **Thor** 146.

The most obvious evidence in Art Simek's lettering, which suddenly gets noticeably larger. The Cap story in **Suspense** 95 is the most profound example — not only for the lettering, but also artwise. This could well be Kirby's first ever attempt at drawing on the new size; the visuals seem very bare and simple compared to issue 94.

He adjusted to it pretty quickly, though. I might be wrong, of course, and I look forward to hearing what other people think.

By the way, I hear that Ditko had a *lot* of trouble with the smaller size over the years and that, in fact, he was allowed to draw his stuff *bigger* in some cases — the latter **Machine Man** issues (15 on), for instance.

Also, Kirby had increasing trouble as his eyesight declined and he drew the second **Super Powers** series for DC (1985), on full-bleed paper, right up to the edges.

Simon Rogers
spr@electranet.com

GOOD Landing? A *Land of the Giants* strip, drawn by Gerry Haylock, ran in all issues of **Joe 90 Top Secret**. The first three parts were, uniquely, an adaptation of the first TV show (and surprisingly good, particularly when you consider what they did to *Star Trek*). I'm not sure how long it continued in **TV21**, but it's in that annual with the blue Spider-Man.

Still on TV related stuff, **Thunderbirds** seems to have gone for good now, it lasted seven issues.

Grant Doig, 44 Monar Court
Dalgety Bay, Fife

CAN anyone answer the following questions for me?

1) Where did the character Solomon Grundy appear between his appearance in **Green Lantern Quarterly** (where he died!) and **Starman** 10?

2) In the TV derived comic, **X-Men Adventures**, after doing the cartoon's version of the *Phoenix Saga*, they did the Savage Land story, then the *Dark Phoenix Saga*. This is confusing, as on the BBC, they showed the Phoenix Saga, an epilogue, tales about Archangel and Iceman and then the Savage Land tale, but *no* Dark Phoenix!

What is going on? Is the Beeb missing out episodes, as well as showing them in a different order?

*Solomon Grundy did make an appearance in **Zero Hour**, albeit for a panel. **Zero Hour** realigned the DC Universe, perhaps his "death" in **Green Lantern Corps** "never" happened in the current reality.*

I can't speak for the BBC, but they could well be doing the same as they did with Classic Star Trek in the late 1960s when they apparently took them out in any order as the cans weren't numbered.

But even that doesn't beat MTV Europe who are showing The Maxx 20 minute cartoons twice weekly in MTV Weird but they don't tell the viewer whether it is a new episode or a repeat of the one from three days earlier. They've been known to do either! You really have to take pot luck with MTV.

Tim Hayes, 6 The Beeches
Hartshill, Nuneaton

TWO brief questions: Back in **Comics International** 49, your preview of the then-ongoing **Druid** mentioned that it would be accompanied by computer software having a soundtrack by a "popular indie rock band". Was it ever recorded? Anyone famous?

And can you explain in nice easy words for the uneconomically minded, how some comic shops have managed to avoid passing on Marvel's most recent rise in recommended UK prices? Why haven't the cheaper shops made more noise about it?

*Latter point: Over to our advertisers. Former point: That "popular indie rock band", according to **Druid's** writer Warren Ellis, could be anybody. He wasn't informed. Editor Marie Javins has since been promoted to the ranks of colourist (go figure) and is freelance so she's out of touch.*

*However, there was a precedent that we do know the answer to. The question is: what "popular indie rock band" was going to record a soundtrack to accompany a comic based on Warren's **Hellstorm**? Glad you asked, the answer is Fields of the Nephilim, whose singer, Carl McCoy (the real one) was so knocked out by **Hellstorm** and artist Leonardo Manco's depiction of Damian Hellstrom bearing an uncanny resemblance to McCoy that he wanted the creative team to produce a Fields of the Nephilim comic. Warren wasn't keen, citing his contempt for the band and Marie had never heard of them. Poor old Leonardo Manco was pretty disappointed, though, as had actually based Hellstrom on Carl McCoy, being a huge fan of the band himself. Dez 'n' Phil*

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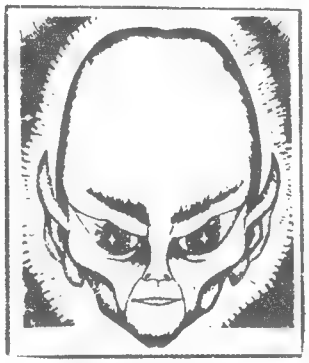

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Code to abbreviations used:

w/s	= wholesale available
dis	= bulk discount terms
cat	= phone/write for catalogue
s-cat	= sae for catalogue
s-wants	= sae with wants lists
CoBRA	= Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
cc	= major credit cards accepted
sae	= send stamped, self-addressed envelope with your enquiry

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Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945 but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comics

■ **Comicana**, 125 East Barnet Rd, Barnet EN4 8RF (dis cat CoBRA cc) 0181-449 5535

■ **Comic Biz**, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 0181 446 3464

■ **Incognito**, 21 Union Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1EB. (s-wants, CoBRA, cc) Phone/fax 01622-683642

■ **Silver Acre Comics**, The Studio Cottage, Edern, Pwllheli, Gwynedd LL53 6JD (s-wants, cc) 01758-720 532

SILVER AGE TITLES

*Generally deemed to commence in 1955 with DC Comics' hero rebirth through **Detective 225** (introducing the Martian Manhunter) and **Showcase 4** (introducing the new Flash), herein covering up to late 1960s.*

■ **Comicana**, 125 East Barnet Road, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis cat CoBRA cc) 0181-449 5535

■ **Comic Biz**, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 0181 446 3464

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■ **Silver Acre Comics**, The Studio Cottage, Edern, Pwllheli, Gwynedd LL53 6JD (s-wants, cc) 01758-720 532

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Comics from the 1970s to date: Bronze Age-Marvel Age-Lead Age up to Platinum Age-Valiant Age-Image Age. Historians will doubtless decide on a name.

■ **AmerCom**, 36 Glan Morfa, Llandudno Junction, Gwynedd LL29 9AA (s-cat)

■ **Comicana**, 125 East Barnet Road, Barnet, EN4 8RF (dis cat CoBRA cc) 0181-449 5535

■ **Comics Warehouse**, PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Road, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 850351

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NEW ■ **David Johnson**, 45 Broadmead, Corsham, Wilts SN13 9AW (s-cat, s-wants, w/s, dis)

■ **Richard Makinson**, 9 George Street, Ossett, West Yorkshire WF5 9PB (s-cat, dis)

■ **ScotWorld Comics**, 86 Glenburn Ave, Newarthill, Motherwell, Lanarkshire ML1 5EF (s-cat) 01698 732709

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Current or key titles, usually first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble on what will increase in value.

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US comics are not in newsagents, except for almost all DCs and most $1.25 Marvels, shipped seafreight. The following offer air-shipped copies from all major publishers.

■ **ACE Comics**, 1 Headgate Buildings, St Johns St, Colchester, Essex CO2 7AD (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

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■ **Forbidden Planet**, 71 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DG (s-cat cc) 0171 497 2150

■ **Gosh! Strips by Mail**, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 0171 636 1011

■ **Mega-City Comics**, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ (s-cat, cc, CoBRA) 0171 485 9320

■ **Red Hot Comics**, 42 Berridale Ave, Cathcart, Glasgow G44 3AE (CoBRA, s-wants) phone/fax: 0141-637 0162

■ **Timezone**, 12 Fish Street, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 1UR (dis, cat, wants) 01743 365192

LIMITED EDITIONS

Many high-profile mini-series and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

■ **Comicana**, 125 East Barnet Rd, Barnet, Herts EN4 8RF (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n) 0181-449 5535

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■ **Adventure Seekers!**, 105 Hullbrook Road, Billesley, Birmingham, B13 OLE (cat, wants) 0121 444 0986

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■ **Next Millennium**, 14 Newark Way Hendon London NW4 4JL (wants) 0181-203 0014

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ORIGINAL ART

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available.

■ **Anime Projects Shop**, 19 High St, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 1NP (anime cels, s-cat, cc, CoBRA) 01248 370044

■ **Conquistador Comic Art Mail Order**, 158 Kent House Rd, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY (wants, CoBRA, cat, cc) 0181-659 9714

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■ **Flights of Fantasy**, 82b Broadway, Bexleyheath DA6 7LW (cat) 0181-298 1363

■ **Strictly Comics Auctions**, 1A Wentworth Court, Alston Rd, Barnet, Herts EN5 4PA (cat)

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Acid-free protection for valuable comics. Backing boards, bags, storage boxes, etc.

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■ **Just Comics**, 2 Crossmead Avenue, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 9TY (w/s only, CoBRA) 0181 578 1308

MANGA TITLES

English language translations and Japanese-style American comics.

■ **Anime Projects Shop**, 19 High St, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 1NP (anime, w/s, s-cat, cc, CoBRA) 01248 370044

■ **Edge of Forever, The**, 82 b Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 7LW. (wants, CoBRA, cc) 0181-298 1363

ART & REFERENCE

Comics history reference magazines & books (ref) plus art books (art) and newspaper strip compilations (strip).

■ **Conquistador Comic Art Mail Order**, 158 Kent House Rd, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY (wants, CoBRA, ref, art, strip, cat, cc) 0181-659 9714

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The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life titles (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar, etc)

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■ **Gosh! Strips by Mail**, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 0171 636 1011

■ **Knockabout Comics**, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 0181 969 2945 (fax: 0181 968 7614)

■ **Page 45**, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. 0115 9508045

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Anybody considering opening a comics specialist shop can obtain further information about the supply of titles from any of the following wholesalers, who air-freight bulk copies of North American comics and related items into Britain on a weekly basis:

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■ **Heroes World**, 13/15 Arundel St, London WC2R 3DX (Marvel titles exclusivity) 0171 208 4500

■ **Palan Distribution**, Unit 1, 1 Morie St, London SW18 1SL (exclusivity: Viz, Kitchen Sink, Coppervale, Bob Burden & non-Marvel/ DC product) 0181 870 4300

In addition, copies of DCs and selected Marvel titles are available to newstrade outlets from their national UK distributors, who ship copies sea-freight from America.

NEW **IPC Market Force** (selected Marvel US standard titles only) 0171 261 6996

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GRADING GUIDE

One of the most problematic areas of buying, selling or valuing comics is grading them. A value can vary by as much as 50% through inaccurate assessment of the condition or grade of the item. The days of a comic being "good condition for its age" disappeared with decimalisation.

With the ever-spiralling values for old comics, the art of grading has become a science. The more expensive titles often carrying a percentage "score", between 100 (mint) and 1 (poor). Defects such as graffiti, shop stamps, taped spine and loose staples *should* be mentioned outside of the grade, with the value reduced accordingly (usually one grade down). To help people assess the grading of their collections better, we present the following definitions:

MINT CONDITION [m] (100%):
An almost impossible acquisition. A comic is mint when it is printed. But it then is counted, stacked, boxed, shipped, counted again, despatched again, counted again and racked in a store. By the time you buy it, it will be near mint at best. Collectors and dealers hardly ever list mint comics. When they do, selling prices are almost always "multiple guide" (ie. Two, three or more times the price stated for a mint copy in the price guides).
M has no defects whatsoever. *It retains its cover gloss (or lustre) and has sharp corners. No printing or binding defects. Staples centred, fresh and shiny. Literally as new.*

NEAR MINT [nm++, nm+, nm, nm-, nm--] (97-90%)
The acknowledged top grade. A particularly handsome copy in near mint is often referred to as nm+, whereas one almost near mint is referred to as nm-. The more expensive the comic, the more precise the grading, with some dealers using the addtional emphasis of nm++ or nm--. We're talking only a 5% difference in price, but on a £1000 or more item, that's £50 a +!
NM has no instantly apparent defects. *A very slight defect is permissible, such as a binding or printing mistake. No fading, spine roll or cover surface wear beyond the smallest corner crease or very slight stress around staples. Cover well centred, still flat and without wear. Spine tight and flat. Interior pages clean white and supple.*

VERY FINE [vf or vfn, from ++ to --] (89-75%)
Still an excellent copy, as much as 25% cheaper than a near mint copy, but with minimal wear beginning to show. Still sharp, clean and bright.
VFN has several very minor defects. *Cover: almost flat, minimal surface wear. Slight wear and very small corner creasing. Staples may be slightly discoloured. Corners may have minute wear. Up to one half-inch light cover crease is acceptable. Interior paper may be slightly off-white.*

FINE [fn, from ++ to --] (74-55%)
Not to be confused with fr or f, the abbreviations for the much lower grade of FAIR. Fine is quite a collectable grade. No major creasing or defects, quite carefully read, but multiple times!
FN has no major defects. *It does have an accumulation of minor defects, small creases, corner knocks or spine damage. But only minor, no major faults.*

VERY GOOD [vg, from + to -] (54-35%)
Despite its name, vg is not very good at all. It is an average used comic book, and the lowest level for most collectors.
VG has moderate wear, cover creasing or spine roll. *Perhaps some fading and discolouration of interior pages. It has no pieces out, except possibly a small cover edge, though crosswords, puzzles or coupons may have been completed. Centre pages may be detached or covers loose from a single staple. Minor tape repair may be present.*

GOOD [g] (34-15%)
Complete, except for small pieces missing, usually around staples or edges. For reading (even in the bath!) and gap filling until a better grade copy comes along.
G copies will be badly creased, but readable and complete. *Pages should not be brittle, but will have lost their suppleness and usually be off-colour.*

FAIR [FR or F] (14-5%)
Another contradictory grade. Unfair would describe it better.
FR copies will be very badly damaged. *No interior pages missing, but cover will have a soiled or well-scuffed cover with spine badly torn and rolled. Chunks may be missing from cover. Ageing on older titles is to be expected, with interior paper browning as it approaches brittleness. Not a copy for your collection.*

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For further information on grading, readers are recommended to refer to the Avon published American annual **Overstreet Comicbook Price Guide** (currently in its 25th year), available from most comics shops in hardback or paperback editions.

REVIEWS

*It is the intention of **Comics International** to help comics readers keep abreast of the entire range of titles currently available through direct sale specialist shops, good newsagents and mail order companies. Few retailers allow titles in stock to be read before choosing purchases; **Comics International**'s reviews are designed to counter this and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section should be of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a new title after purchase.*

***Review codes:** General competitive performance of a title is measured on a scale of 1 to 10. A specific issue's quality, as measured against previous issues: <- - -> to <+ + +>.*

*Two ratings are used for the sake of detailed and fair coverage. The number following each review (on a scale of 1 to 10) is a quality comparison with similar titles currently being published. We make no attempt to compare **Bone** to **X-Men**, but review each within the context of its own genre.*

The individual issue is also rated within the confines of its previous issues. Hence a comparatively dull title may get a low number but a high rating for the specific issue reviewed (ranging from <-> to <+ + +> if there has been a notable improvement.

***Reviews Editor:** Sarah Bolesworth*

Reviewing panel: Mo Baig (MB), Fabio P Barbieri (FPB), Simon Bowland (SiB), Grant S Doig (GSD), Steven Fox (SF), Richard J Johnston (RJJ), Mark Kirwan-Heyhoe (MK-H), Phil Hall (PH), Daniel Mokades (DM), Peter C Phillips (PCP), Ian R Salmon (IRS), Stuart Taylor (ST), Paul Wood (PaW) and Alan Woolcombe (AW).

DARK HORSE

American Splendor: Windfall 2

by Pekar + Brabner & Gilbert + Neufeld + Sacco + Stack

<+ -> This writer-driven comic ties in with the aftermath of Pekar's cancer and reaction to his book, as well as examining the mind of one of comic-books' true troopers. The art is mixed, but each moment lives. Compared to previous Pekar, there is a growing sense of optimism. (RJJ) **7**

Cross 1

by Vachss + Colbert + & Londin-Gallant + Sheldon

Cross has been educated mostly in US correctional facilities. From them, he has emerged as a formidable freelance on the Chicago underworld, with some hints of a surprising soft core. However, this first episode feels slightly diluted, perhaps because of rather ordinary art. (FPB) **8**

Cud Comics 1

By Laban

Good Lord! What sordid depravity is this? A donation competition at the sperm bank? A spotty teenage adventurer being lured into temptation? Cryogenically stored 30-year-old Mary Jane?! Our children must be protected from such humorous and well-rendered parodies. Disgustingly good. (PaW) **9**

Ghost in the Shell 1-8

By Shirow

A superbly collectable series focusing on Major Kusanagi, head of a covert government team in a future Japan, dealing with terrorists, international relations, artificial-intelligence, crime and the definition of life. This is the first time any manga has been presented in English with its pages in the original full colour, as they are in Japan — beautiful. However, a small disappointment is that Dark Horse have published the censored version of issue two — but at least it was redrawn by Shirow himself. (PaW) **10**

Ghost 7

Luke & Benefiel + Rodriguez

This is the first time I've read this title — God, it's subversive. Visually, it appears to be aimed at young boys (that costume could *not* stay up in the real world), but the subtext smacks of radical feminism. Above all though, it's a damn fine read. (IRS) **7**

Gunsmith Cats 7

By Sonada

Minnie-May gets herself involved with an old flame — the explosives expert she learned everything from. But he wants out of the explosives business and hopes that Minnie-May will help him! Sonoda's art and script is proving to be consistently strong. (PaW) **8**

Bomb-making terrorist ex-boyfriend of Minnie May turns to her for help, having decided to cross his current employers. Top quality entertainment. (PCP) **9**

Martha Washington: Stranded in Space

by Miller & Gibbons

Our heroine goes adventuring in space, where she meets Big Guy and a horde of stereotypical cannibal aliens who turn out — oh, surprise of surprises — to be fakes run from Earth. Breathtaking artwork, the best I've seen from Dave Gibbons, with sensational colours. But isn't it sad what is happening to Frank Miller? (FPB) **4**

Oh My Goddess 31

By Fujishima

<+> *On a Wing and a Prayer* — the first of the one-shot stories. It's certainly an improvement: the idea of unearthing an animate World War II plane whose only desire is the chance to fly for the first time is touching, but it's slightly too sugary with it. (PaW) **7**

DC COMICS

Action Comics 717

by Michelinie & Dwyer + Rodier

<+ -> On the run from the Tribunal, Superman and his new companion Mope continue to search for salvation, but unfortunately for them, the Cyborg (yes, he's back again!) is on their trail, determined to capture them. He nearly failed, but Superman's morals let him down and he winds up in jail again, once more facing the death sentence. Average yarn, and although Kieron Dwyer's artwork is a treat, I fear he's being smothered somewhat by Denis Rodier's inks. (SiB) **6**

Aquaman 16

by David & Egeland + Shum

<+> An extremely aggressive Aquaman takes exception to the JLA invading his underwater domain. Usual yarn, to say the least. (PCP) **8**

Books of Magic 20

Ney Rieber & Ridgway

<+-> How can a book this well written and illustrated be considered a disappointment? Easily, when it has this title's high standards to live up to. Tim (both of him) and Molly attempt to escape a fairytale. An epilogue to *Playgrounds*, seemingly tacked on with scant thought for the previous chapters. (IRS) **7**

Catwoman 28

by Dixon & Balent + Smith

A crooked lawyer hires some specialists, including Catwoman and Mouse, to break into a hi-tech bank vault. The Penguin monitors developments. Shades of *Mission Impossible*. (PCP) **8**

Damage 20

Joyner & Marimon + Hillsman

<-> Possessed by a biological virus, Damage goes on a rampage with only Iron Munro standing against him. Series concludes with a whimper. (PCP) **4**

Darkstars 38

Friedman & Collins + Marzan

<-> Numerous loose ends are tied up in a mish-mash series finale whose cardboard characters are lacking in conviction. (PCP) **3**

DC Comics: 60 Years of the World's Favorite Comic Book Heroes

by Daniels; Virgin Books

A companion to **Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades of the World's Greatest Comics, DC Comics...** is the definitive history of the oldest extant American comics company. Artists, writers, films, merchandising — every angle is explored and every major event chronicled right up to, and including, **Zero Hour** and *Batman Forever*, in just the right amount of detail. Each topic is covered in double-page spreads, with copious, swoonsome (*oh! smell that paper...*), high-gloss illustrations and comprehensive indexes front and back. The only missing element is photos of the principal writers and artists involved; only Siegel and Schuster and Kane and Sprang (What, no Kirby, Kubert or Adams?) are depicted, along with a few editors and publishers. That major niggle apart, this lavish, encyclopedic, coffee-table tome represents 260 pages of comics perfection. Santa, if you please... (AW) **10**

The Flash 109

by Waid & Jimenez + Marzan Jr

<+> Flash joins up with the cast of Impulse as a Ninja clan attempt to eradicate the world of speedsters. It's all a plan of the mysterious Savitar, who himself seems to be blessed with super-speed. Max appears to be the first casualty, and as his life hangs in the balance, Wally West sets off to kick-start an epic confrontation with Savitar. Thrill-a-minute, and Oscar Jimenez's speed scenes are breathtaking. (SiB) **10**

<+> After rescuing Impulse and X-S from Savitar's followers, Flash and his super-speed colleagues discover the secrets of Savitar's origins. Mark Waid continues to excel, and Oscar Jiminez maintains his form on the art. (GSD) **9**

<+> *Dead Heat*, part two, reveals the origin of Savitar, including his involvement with Max Mercury and Johnny Quick. Impossibly, this series continues to get better issue by issue. (PCP) **9**

Goddess 7

by Ennis & Winslade

<+> The most artistically detailed book in the Vertigo stable sees mayhem and murder increase to the extent where it becomes blasé and mundane. Steadfastly refusing to come to terms with the consequences of the characters' actions, this book continues to offend throughout, right up until a surprisingly

beautiful climax. (RJJ) 6

The Horrorist 1

by Delano & Lloyd

John Constantine is in one of his moods, and it takes a ghostly, magical creature to drag him out of his complacency. The Horrorist is responsible for atrocities, the cause of which lie in her past. Vivid, fast-paced plot with painted art that brings delight and then horror. Nasty, very nasty. (RJJ) 9

Industrial Gothic 1

by McKeever

A horrific future where beauty is the accepted norm and rejects are rejected. Ted McKeever uses his dark style to paint a depressing picture, but not one without hope. We are introduced to the main players as they attempt to break out from their prison to join society. Combined with the poetic prose, this needs work to read, but is well worth the struggle. (RJJ) 9

Invisibles 16

by Morrison & Johnson

<+> This issue returns the focus of the story to Jack Frost, a character whose dialogue Grant Morrison writes brilliantly. The story is a perfectly blended mix of realism and sheer indulgent pretension — Morrison at his very best, in other words. Nice art too, and a lovely use of colours. (IRS) 8

Legionnaires 32

by Peyer + McCraw & Moy

<-> After Legion headquarters is destroyed in a battle with Chronos, the SciencePolice move against the team to curb their illegal time-travel experiments, arresting a Legionnaire. Everything returns to "normal" after the Superboy crossover. Great writing and art. Classic superheroics with a Nineties sensibility. (GSD) 8

<+-> Brainy's trapped in the timestream, but dabbling in time is outlawed — can the Legionnaires save Brainy before the Science Police step in? Good work again from all involved. (SF) 7

Millennium Fever 3

by Abadzis & Fegredo

<+ -> Frighteningly reminiscent of Milestone's **Static**, Jerome is trying to come to terms with his life and the increasingly surreal behaviour of his girlfriend. Jerome has some revelations, but has to pay for the consequences. The art remains vivid and spectacularly realistic, but with the potential to explode into madness when required. (RJJ) 8

<+-> Some of the mystery of Jerome's perfect woman is explained, leading to yet further mysteries. Never a compelling series, but enjoyable. Nick Abadzis has an enjoyable writing style and Duncan Fegredo just keeps getting better. (IRS) 7

Robin 24

by Dixon & Lopresti + Woch

<+ -> Charaxes, a Neron-induced metamorphosis of The Moth, has captured Robin and plans to eat him. "All this" says Robin "and I've got algebra homework". Dixon is totally at home on this title, writing the teenage relationship between Tim and girlfriend Ariana, and this issue is no exception as he introduces the problem of teenagers and firearms. Transitional penciller Aaron Lopresti does a sound job here, too. (SiB) 8

The Sandman 73

Gaiman & Zulli

<+> In an epilogue to *The Wake*, Hob Gadling meets Death while visiting a theme park which recreates his early life. Readers of this title will know how many ways there are to interpret that statement. Lovely script, gorgeous art: a marvellous way to bid farewell to creations with whom we have grown comfortable. (IRS) 9

Sandman Mystery Theatre 33

by Wagner + Seagle & Pleece

World events trouble Wesley, Dian's taken an interest in physical jerks and a Bible-quoting strangler's on the loose. It's another day for the Sandman and a typical opener for this series. Warren Pleece's art will not be to everybody's taste — it's not to mine. (ST) 7

Superboy 23

by Kesel & Grummett & Erwin + various

<-> Knockout teaches Superboy a thing or two about life as SB's two ardent admirers look on, green with envy... But nothing can prepare the youngster for his greatest challenge yet: his history teacher! Still well written, but the book is crying out for a regular penciller as Tom Grummett is reduced to basic layouts again this month. (SiB) 6

Superman: Man of Steel 52

by L. Simonson & Bogdanove + Giordano

<+> Thanks to the Cyborg, Supes has been hauled back up

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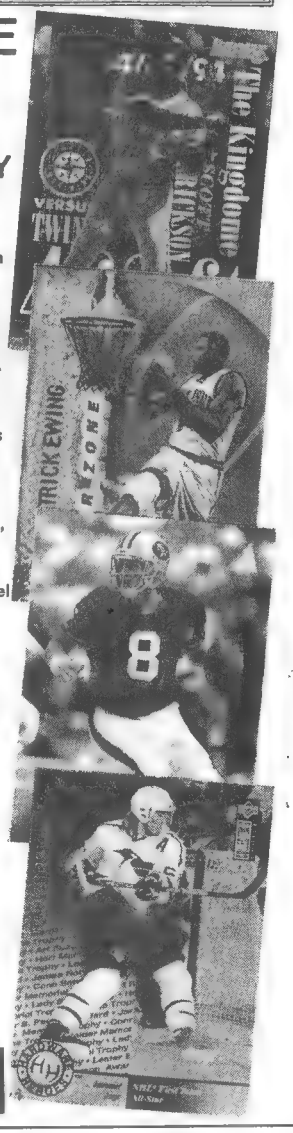

in front of The Tribunal, who decree that his execution must be carried out, even after he stops the Cyborg from killing the Tribunal! Madness, action, suspense, it's all in there, and Dick Giordano's inks actually make (wait for this) Jon Bogdanove's pencils almost bearable! It's true! (SiB) 6

Superman/Toyman 1

by Kesel & Immonen + Von Grawbadger

The evil Toyman is free once again, and his toys are exploding all over the city in an what proves to be a bid to attract Superman's attention. It does just that, and the inevitable showdown occurs at the end, although it's done with a twist as Supes is made to believe he's five inches tall. Above average script with gorgeous, clear artwork and vibrant colouring. (SiB) 8

Toyman freaks out when not included in a new line of Superman toys. Nice visuals, but the plot is paper thin. (PCP) 5

Swamp Thing 161

by Millar & Hester + DeMulder

<+> Abby returns, or seems to, and wants reconciliation with Swampy. The hurt lover rejects her as his priorities change. But Swamp Thing is under attack from more than his emotions, and the entire town is affected. Scratchy, dark art reflects the changes of Swamp Thing and the changes yet to come. Things look murky for our grim elemental. (RJJ) 8

Underworld Unleashed 3

by Waid & Porter + Green

The third and final part of this autumn crossover features the DC heroes' perilous journey into the pits of Hell to rescue Superman. The fact that the Man of Steel is currently on trial in outer space and is nowhere near the Underworld seems to have passed them by. The fast-paced script holds a genuine surprise when it is revealed who Neron is *really* out to corrupt. (ST) 9

<+> Neron heads for a fall at the hands of DC's heroes in this concluding issue. No surprises in store, which by Mark Waid's standards is a let-down. Even so, it's been entertaining to a degree. (PCP) 6

Wonder Woman 105

by John Byrne

<-> Attending a job interview at a local museum, Diana is unwittingly drawn in to a battle with an ancient mythical robot warrior desperate to kill people. It's a slightly dodgy concept, but the high points are Byrne's subplots, featuring Jason Blood and the Phantom Stranger. These bode very well for future issues. Basic story and art is, as ever, unsurpassable. (SiB) 9

<+-> Diana takes on a new job and a giant Minoan robot sorcerous brews nastiness in jolly old London Town. If you ever needed proof of the enduring influence of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, this is it, as performed by a master — and it's not a Marvel comic or a Kirby Kreation. (AW) 7

<+-> An ancient Cretan statue runs amok in a city museum. This really is a dull actioner — uninspired three or four panel "sketched" pages don't help. (PCP) 4

IMAGE COMICS

Astro City 4

by Busiek & Anderson + Ross

<+ -> A young woman's journey to work takes her through the heart of Astro City, which seems as normal until the mysterious Hanged Man looks her in the eye, and her troubles begin. Not particularly action-packed, but then again, it's the sound artwork and excellent character development that makes this book a success. (SiB) 10

<-> Despite the superheroic element of the title, this issue is the least "realistic" so far, introducing a supernatural section of the city. A fairly predictable plot, and superior, realistically ambiguous art aside, the beauty of this book is in the details. Sharp-eyed readers can piece together history and deduce future plots effectively. Still, there are enough interesting concepts to keep this truly different superhero comic afloat. (RJJ) 7

<-> A look at one woman's life on both sides of Astro City. Kurt Busiek can do absolutely anything with this book, and obviously intends to. The greatest strength here is that we can learn more about characters in two panels than most books would offer in years of publication. (GSD) 8

Cybernary 1

by Gerber & Rebner + Friend

Despite the dull technopunk concept, this Steve Gerber title shows some real promise, finding strong drama and pathos in the heroine's predicament. The art, though decent Image fare, sadly misses the late Nick Manabat (who died of cancer). (FPB) 7

Glory 6

by Duffy & Deodato Jr

<-> Glory's called in to investigate cases of dead people who are — well, still living. It seems that a creature who sucks the life out of others is responsible, and now he wants Glory. Passable one-part story but the art is a disappointment, with Mike Deodato contributing little more than his name in the credits, rather than any actual artwork. (SiB) 6

Creature who needs life-energy to survive leeches off various call-girls before turning his attentions on Glory. Big mistake — as was publishing this below-par nonsense. (PCP) 3

Maxx 20

by Kieth + Messner-Loebs

<+> Julie, it would seem, is cured; the Hooly is restored to its original beneficent nature; the Maxx knows who he is, at last; and Mr Gone is out of the picture. So why is everyone unhappy? In a startlingly sad conclusion to the story, the hero goes away, and then, a single page at the back, foretells the end of the world. (FPB) 10

Spawn 36

by McFarlane & Capullo

Friends fight, and friends fight nastily as Spawn hits out at Fitzgerald while Sam and Twitch continue pursuing their own agenda. The writing makes me gag, but the art looks better than ever. Leaving Todd McFarlane to add his inking flourish over Capullo's funky pencils is one of the better decisions in this flawed book. (RJJ) 4

WildC.A.T.s 24

by Moore & Benjamin

Moore may be doing this for the money, but he is hacking it: all his typical hallmarks are here — clever reworkings of traditional plot elements, vigorous characters and far left politics. The art is undistinguished; did I hear a rumour about Kevin Maguire becoming permanent artist? Roll on the day! (FPB) 7

MARVEL COMICS

Akira 36

By Otomo; Epic

<-> Akira gains full consciousness as Lady Miyuko stands alone against Tetsuo. This is the end of Akira, and the series thunders to a close with a nicely handled ending hinting at explanations for some past events. Unfortunately, this issue reads extremely quickly and *has* to be read with the other issues. It doesn't stand alone, so the score suffers. (PaW) 8

All New Exiles 1

by Kavanagh & Lashley + Wyman

Contrived plots lead to predictable fight scenes, with repellent art — the artist can't decide which Image artist to rip off from one panel to the next. You've read this comic many times before, but Tom DeFalco did it better. It's ironic that one of the better Malibu books, **Ultraforce** 1, is reprinted in the back. (RJJ) 2

<++> The Exiles' arrival on Earth coincides with a massive explosion. They are pursued by the authorities, who assume them to be responsible. Terry Kavanagh succeeds in making previously boring Marvel characters interesting and Ken Lashley makes a welcome return to the X-titles. (GSD) 7

Amazing Fantasy 16

by Busiek & Lee

Peter Parker relives the first real adventure of his exciting early days as Spider-Man. Busiek furnishes a simple, solid and fresh script with interesting ideas. Lee's painting is subtle, moody and even depressing at times — as a sharp contrast to the neo-neon painting of Igor Kordey's **Wonder Years**. Doubly engaging. (DM) 9

Kurt Busiek's typically character-driven script has the young Peter Parker coming to terms with his new-found powers. Busiek's character insight and Paul Lee's pleasing art make this a thoroughly enjoyable read. (MB) 8

Amazing Spider-Man 407

by DeFalco & Bagley + Mahlstedt

<+> Spidey's new look prompts some consternation throughout New York — is it the same Spidey? The Human Torch, Silver Sable and Sandman intend to find out, whether they kill poor Spidey in the process or not! Nicely written, it even makes Mark Bagley's dire artwork seem mildly bearable — only mildly, mind you! (SiB) 6

Avengers 393

by Harras + Raab & Deodato + Palmer

<+> Tony Stark finally flips when questioned about recent events in the Avengers team, and in a rage, ends up shooting the Wasp. Can things get any worse for the team? There is no lapse in quality as the writing team now numbers three, but Mike Deodato doesn't seem so inspired now. (SiB) 7

<++> Iron Man's murderous guilt is discovered by the Avengers, who try in vain to catch him — but not before he badly wounds another team member. *The Crossing* is picking up speed as its end nears. Mike Deodato's pencils are again spoiled by scratchy inking. (GSD) 8

<-> Kang finally shows up in *The Crossing*. The desperate Stark, meanwhile, battles his thoroughly baffled team-mates. Both plot and art are fine, but Ben Raab's script is unwieldy and fails to capture many of the characters' voices, notably Hank Pym's and Hercules'. (MB) 6

Cable 27

by Loeb & Ryan + Tyler

<+> Cable and the Genoshan

freedom-fighters close in on the Sugarman, as Mr Sinister waits in the wings. It's hard to believe how much this title has changed since Jeph Loeb took over the writing chores. Even Genosha is made interesting! (GSD) 9

Cable & X-Force '95

by Loeb & Ryan + Tyler

Cable and X-Force's holiday is interrupted by the arrival of the Impossible Man. A mediocre story that would have worked better in the regular title, and even then wouldn't have been that great. A wasted opportunity. (GSD) 2

Captain America 447

by Waid & Garney + Manley

<+ -> Cap and the Red Skull continue their quest for the Cosmic Cube, but it seems the trust placed in the Skull by Cappo has not been reciprocated, much to Cap's chagrin! Mark Waid begins to offer a few pointers as to what's going on, and although penciller Ron Garney does a fine job, he needs a regular inker — four in as many issues so far! (SiB) 9

<++> This is far better than last issue. Mark Waid gets a grip on the characters again, giving some thought to motivation and moral perspectives. It's what he does best, and it makes a hell of a difference. More good work from the art team, typically Marvel but with an edge. (IRS)7

<+> Cap, Sharon Carter and the *Red Skull* fighting the Nazis? The star-spangled Avenger hasn't been this exciting in years, but it's at the cost of long-established continuity. Long-lost girlfriend Sharon Carter is now a mean, identikit Babe With Attitude and the Red Skull, who crushed a dozen trained fighters not long ago, is whupped by four Nazi soldiers. But never mind the history, feel the pace! (AW)7

<+> Cap, Skull and Sharon attempt to impose their wills on the reality-altering Cosmic Cube. The excellent creative team is producing a quite outstanding title. (MB) 9

<+-> Four different people — Adolf Hitler, the Red Skull, Sharon Carter and Steve Rogers — have the chance of seizing the Cosmic Cube and reshaping reality according to their own design. Worth any price just for the heart-stopping moment in which Rogers turns Sharon back into the woman he loved.(FPB)9

Captain Marvel 2

by Nicieza & Benes + Sellers

<+> A definite improvement on the first issue, this issue is less cluttered and makes more sense. Captain Marvel appears in Rick Jones's TV talk show and tries to explain a few things. But Rick spoils everything, resulting in a punch-up! The art from Ed Benes has picked up somewhat, although it and the character need more work. He can't hold a candle to the original Captain Mar-vell. (SiB) 6

Cutting Edge 1

by Messner-Loebs & Medina + Pelletier

New military pain-in-the-ass Major Talbot employs the Ringmaster to get inside the captive Hulk's mind and create mayhem. A poor relation to the regular title, **Cutting Edge** ties into *Ghosts of the Future* without advancing the story. In the current state of Marveldom, this quarterly will be lucky to reach issue 3. (AW) 5

The big Hulk story continues as Ringmaster's mind-games with the captured Bruce go haywire. Well scripted, with some fine pencils, this carries on nicely from **Hulk** 436. (MB) 7

Daredevil 348

by DeMatteis & Nord + Reinhold

<-> Now finally back as Matt Murdock, Daredevil is finding it difficult to readjust to everything he tried to run away from a few months ago. Foggy and Karen are having problems themselves, as Matt's mind and then body wanders. Brilliantly written and the guest-penciller does a fine job, although everything looks a like a Frank Miller rip-off to me. (SiB) 8

<-> Matt, haunted by past sins, visits his "mother" before running into old mentor Stick. Cary Nord's art is fairly good, but DeMatteis's script is intelligent, insightful and superbly paced. (MB) 7

Doom 2099 #37

by Ellis & Wood + Koblish

<-> With the aid of The Driver (a typically perverse Ellis creation), Doom and Static Annie escape to Halo City. A fine script is slightly let down by Ashley Wood's inconsistent art. (MB) 7

Excalibur 93

by Ellis & Jones + Simmons

Wolfsbane finally returns to Muir Isle and confronts the evil Reverend Craig — although this time she's not afraid of him. Writer Ellis does a sound job here, but his evocation of Meggan's character is way off the mark. Penciller Casey Jones is impressive and it's a shame to see him depart, even for Carlos

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Pacheco. (SiB) 7

<- -> Rahne Sinclair returns home to confront her past. Warren Ellis contributes his usual strong character development but, unusually, his dialogue strays into cliché in places. His first really ordinary script combines with hurried-looking pencils for an issue that looks like a fill-in. (IRS) 6

<+-> Rahne confronts the Rev Craig and finally shakes off his fearsome influence. An intense Warren Ellis script gives more depth to Rahne's character than we've seen in years, while Casey Jones turns in another impressive pencilling job. (MB)7

Fantastic Four Unplugged 3

by Lackey & Melo + Dzon

While the FF team are searching for Reed Richards, Reed himself is hiding out in a dark cave on a distant world, living the life of a recluse until a boy arrives on the scene asking for his help. A so-so story — the odd piece of dialogue is a little forced — and while the artwork cannot be called poor, it's not a classic. (SiB) 6

Force Works 19

by Abnett + Lanning & Oliveira + Garcia

<+> More and more clues are uncovered as to why Tony Stark has suddenly decided to kill the Avengers, but unfortunately for Amanda Chaney, her discoveries lead to Stark executing her. Then Century and War Machine turn up and things really hot up! New artist Heitor Oliveira makes a superb debut and writers Abnett and Lanning are as impeccable as ever! (SiB) 8

Generation X 11

By Lobdell + DeZago & Semeiks

<++> Chamber takes on Omega Red while the White Queen continues her journey through Banshee's mind. The comic suffers from having two scripters, but the art is better than recent months. (GSD) 6

<-> Chamber sees off Omega Red while Banshee does the same, in his own mind. Poorer than usual script but fairly good art — this title has been slipping the last couple of issues. (MB) 6

Incredible Hulk 437

by David & Medina + Riggs

<+ -> The Army is bombarding the Hulk with psychological torture, keeping him in his weakened human form. But policeman Chief Largo's secret is revealed this issue when he announces he's going to free the Hulk — that's if the once-green guy lives long enough. Definitely on the road to recovery, with some great artwork. (SiB) 9

<+-> The Alliance launches its attacks, while Largo shows his true colours in his Headshop attempt to rescue Bruce. Well written (despite Largo's silly origin), with impressive visuals — this is proving to be an engrossing storyline. (MB) 8

Iron Man 323

by Abnett + Kavanagh & Cheung + McKenna

<+> Hawkeye accuses Iron Man of framing him for murder, which does little to help Tony Stark's credibility of late. Then, through some clever mind-probing, the Avengers discover that Stark has been responsible for the recent killings in Avengers Mansion. Two different artists do little to detract from an enthralling yarn. (SiB) 8

Last Avengers Story 2

by David & Olivetti

<-> Hank Pym assemblies the last ever Avengers line-up for the battle against Ultron. Basically an issue-long battle scene but, with Peter David's usual sure grasp on the nature of heroes, it becomes a dark, witty insight into the last days of the Marvel Universe. (IRS) 7

Mantra 2

by Barr & Roberts + Amash; Malibu Ultraverse

<-> Mantra finds herself drowning at the hands of Coven, but even with her powers, her lack of fighting prowess could prove to be her downfall — which makes a change from the standard invincible superhero regime. Well-scripted, nicely paced with some great artwork, although it tends to look a tad rushed as the issue progresses. Overall, fun! (SiB) 7

The Night Man 2

by Englehart & Wildman + Baskerville; Ultraverse

<+ -> The Night Man's quest to find his captured friends leads him to the mysterious castle of a Russian monk named Rasputin — and then the werewolf turns up. It's a doozy of a romp through magic and mystery, backed up with some highly competent visuals. (SiB) 8

Professor X and the X-Men 3

by Nicieza & Duursema + Sellers

<+> Introducing The Blob, a mixed-up mutant with no real purpose in life until he receives a visit from the X-Men. Can they convince this walking attitude (who earns his keep as a sideshow freak) to be the next to join their ranks? No chance! Slightly better written than normal, and the artwork has also found a refinement. (SiB) 7

Prime 2

by Jones + Strazewski & West + Moy; Malibu Ultraverse

<-> There are two Primes around now: one is the ridiculous Spider-Prime and the other, it would seem, testosterone incarnate. The basic premise sees Spider-Prime fighting the Lizard, Muscle Prime getting off with Phade and Turbo Charge confessing he's gay. A far cry from the original series, with inferior artwork a further detraction. (SiB) 4

Sabretooth Special

by Nicieza & Frank

The X-Men chase the newly-escaped Creed through New York. Some good dialogue and clean, attractive pencils — but also a pretty stiff price tag. (MB) 7

Sensational Spiderman 0

by Jurgens w/Janson

Good "fresh start" issue which sets Ben Reilly up as the Spiderman, once and for all, complete with new costume and dubious haircut. After a break, Ben feels it's time to return to the Spidey persona and sets about getting the rest of his life on track — like a job, money and a roof over his head. Harks back to the Spidey of the Seventies and Eighties, with some impressive storytelling from Dan Jurgens. (SiB) 8

Silver Surfer 111

by Perez & Grindberg + Anderson

<++> While answering a false distress call the Silver Surfer is captured by a group of mysterious beings who show his entire life being torn apart by the mysterious evil of Blackbeat; and then things begin to get strange. New writer Perez makes his mark immediately, and he's backed up with some simply stunning visual work from Tom Grindberg. (SiB) 9

Spider-Man 2099AD 39

by David & Wildman + Baskerville

<+ -> Venom is revealed to be Kron Stone, an arch-nemesis from Miguel O'Hara's past. An obligatory but nevertheless quite interesting Venom 2099 origin then ensues. As Spidey tries to control his rage, girlfriend Xina comes to terms with how she cheated death. Back on track storywise, although the usually excellent Andy Wildman's work looks rushed. (SiB) 8

Spider-Man 64

by Mackie & Romita Jr + Williamson + various

<++> Having rescued a young boy from a blazing building, Spidey encounters the wild and wacky Poison, a woman with a big attitude and the powers to back it. They both set off on a mission to rescue her son, who is being held captive by El Toro Negro. At last, a decent one-off Spidey adventure, and seeing JR drawing the character again makes you feel as if you've died and gone to heaven. (SiB) 8

Spidey 2099 meets Spidey 1995

by David & Leonardi + Williamson

Peter Parker and Miguel O'Hara become the victims of a scientific experiment, as Peter awakens in the future and Miguel wakes up in bed next to a very startled MJ! After brief encounters with local resident-cast members, the two meet up and save the day. The inevitable ending is countered by some superb banter from the two Spideys, and the long-awaited return of penciller Rick Leonardi. (SiB) 8

2099's creative team-supreme cause the two Spideys' to end up in each other's time, and thoroughly enjoyable it is, too. Expensive it might be, but thanks to the excellent art and spot-on dialogue, it's also worth it. (MB) 8

Starjammers 4

by Ellis & Pacheco + Smith + Wiacek

The Starjammers find themselves smack-bang in the middle of a war between the Shi'ar and the Uncreated and try to end the war in a non-combatant manner. What made this mini-series shine, was Warren Ellis's characters — when you could almost feel what the characters were thinking — and the infallible artwork from the underrated Carlos Pacheco. Encore, *maestros*! (SiB) 9

<+> Our heroes confront the terrifying Uncreated with an image of their god. Another superb Warren Ellis script, and artist Carlos Pacheco is surely destined for big things. The best mini-series for years. (MB) 9

Terminator 2: Cybernetic Dawn #1

by Abnett & Whightam + Snider; Malibu

Following on from the film, this title delves, with Sarah and John Connor, into the present-day Terminator conflicts. A development team recovers shattered pieces from a Terminator, and then three more roll up from the future. Great stuff, thanks to some classic artwork and brilliant scripting. Pass the popcorn. (SiB) 9

Terminator 2: Nuclear Twilight 1

by Paniccia & Erskine; Malibu

Set in the year 2029, John Connor is still fighting the Terminator wars and he now fights alongside Danny Dyson, the son of the Skynet creator — so why is Danny recreating

Skynet? Enthralling stuff that leaves you right on the edge of your seat, and Gary Erskine's artwork is just stunning. (SiB) 9

Thor 493

Ellis & Deodato

<++> In which Warren Ellis brings on the death of the Gods, gets Thor into bed with the Enchantress, proves the Thunder God is actually an alien and gives us all a lesson in Norse mythology. Meanwhile, Mike Deodato mutates into Neal Adams. Rather splendid. (IRS) 8

<++> Superheroes are not really my thing, but Ellis's story about a conspiracy that is destroying the Nordic Tree of Life is a gem of a read. Some nice pencilling by Deodato, too, although his rendering of Beta Ray is weak. (MK-H) 6

2099 Genesis

by Ellis & Eaglesham + Koblish

Warren Ellis introduces 2099's newest characters and (no surprise here) does it with an engrossing script. Of the new characters, Daredevil 2099 looks especially interesting. I was unfamiliar with the work of Dale Eaglesham, but thought that his pencils were pretty good. (MB) 7

Untold Tales of Spider-Man 5

by Busiek & Olliffe + Milgrom

<+ -> The Vulture's back, but Spidey's biggest problem comes in the form of a broken camera, ruining the action photos he needed to sell to editor J. Jonah Jameson at the **Daily Bugle** and leaving an on-the-loose Vulture and a fuming newspaper editor! Quirky, lively script with the usually consummate artwork from the badly underrated Pat Olliffe. (SiB) 9

Uncanny X-Men 328

by Lobdell & Madureira + Townsend

<+> Sabretooth is back to his nasty ways again — it's official! And when Boomer tries to reason with him, all hell breaks loose and Psylocke finds herself at death's door. Can she possibly still be alive? Lobdell writes a superb X-book, in which wit abounds, and the return of the superlative Joe Madureira's pencils is a real bonus. (SiB) 9

<++> Sabretooth tricks Boomer into releasing him, and Psylocke gets caught in the middle. Lobdell manages to insert a few unexpected twists into Sabretooth's seemingly inevitable escape and Madureira demonstrates again why he is deserving of this high-profile job. (GSD) 9

<+> Sabretooth tricks Boomer into releasing him and promptly eviscerates Psylocke. This is an excellent issue, superbly scripted by Scott Lobdell, while Joe Madureira's pencils get better and better. (MB) 9

What If...? 81

by Mariano Nicieza & Hopgood

Writer Mariano Nicieza takes us back to the X-Men *Age of Apocalypse* saga, in a reality where the storyline continued rather than returning to normal continuity. The story itself is average as the mutants face Galactus, but the high point is the digital artwork of Kev Hopgood — which even more impressive when you consider it's a standard format comic. (SiB) 7

X-Factor 118

by Mackie & Hitch + Neary

<+-> Under orders from the AOA Beast, Random attacks Havok. Bryan Hitch's art is inconsistent at times, as the sequence with Naze and Roma look very different to the rest of the comic. Unless, of course, there is an uncredited penciller on a third of the issue. (GSD) 6

X-Force 50

by Loeb & Pollina + various

Sebastion Shaw sends X-Force to kill Cable and Domino. Jeph Loeb has a good grasp of these characters and he delivers an intense, well-paced script. Adam Pollina's distinctive visuals are wonderful. (MB) 7

X-Man 11

by Ostrander & Skroce + LaRosa

Steve Skroce pencils an entire issue, for a change, but he needn't have bothered. What starts out as stylised artwork swiftly turns into rather sketchy, cartoony pap. Writer John Ostrander does his best, as the X-Cutioner returns to kill Rogue. It's a bit clichéd, mind you, and Rogue's saucer eyes (courtesy of Mr Skroce) really make me cringe. (SiB) 5

X-Men Archives Captain Britain 6

by Moore & Davis

<+> *The Candlelight Dialogues* introduces the Captain's future girlfriend, Meggan. But the highlight of the issue is his surreal confrontation with Mad Jim Jaspers. Things look bleak when the Captain cannot seem to beat a man who can warp reality. But never mind, at least the Fury isn't around. But then again, who *is* that in the last panel? (ST) 10

X-Men 48

by Lobdell & Ross + Lanning

<+> The X-Men lighten up with a game of cards, but while they are (for the time being) having fun Bishop is having none, because he's on the verge of cracking up and slaying one of

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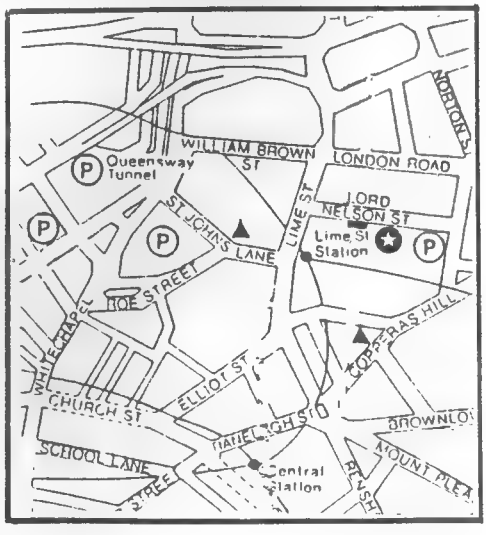

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the team. And then the card game gets serious. Writer Scott Lobdell injects his usual flair and guest artist Luke Ross does a good Jim Lee impression, although his regular style would have sufficed. (SiB) 7

INDEPENDENTS

Another Day 1

by Miranda; Raised Brow

An office worker begins to discover he has superpowers, with comic and sometimes embarrassing side-effects. This book is rather discursive, unfocused, spending too much time on the messy lives of the protagonist's friends. But it is well-conceived and well-drawn and, on the whole, rather enjoyable. (FPB) 6

Apocrypha Now 2

by Rossomanno & Brock; Red Hand Press

<+-> If they worked together, the two authors might compensate for each other's flaws: Rossomanno delivers a valid and interesting story but can't draw; Brock contributes excellent graphics to subnormal stories. As it is, this stays an unsatisfactory package. (FPB) 5

Athena 1

by Hsieh; A.M Works

This book is dim. It uses Greek god's names and a manga style for no obvious reason. Its tone is sleazy. Its storytelling is mediocre. Its characters are unengaging. Its story is nothing new. In short, it proves that not *all* self-publishers have something to say. Avoid it like the plague. (FPB) 0

Avengelyne: Power 1

by Liefeld & Stinsman; Maximum Press

Avengelyne visits Los Angeles and tries to help a teenaged prostitute. This really is routine soap-opera fodder. (PCP) 3

Bad Girls of Blackout Annual 1

by Schoengood & Platt; Blackout

Lady Vampire, Violet and Hari Kari investigate when several models are murdered for their body parts. The story, however, is murdered by a disjointed plot and diverse art styles. (PCP) 3

Book of Ballads and Sagas 1

By Vess & Gaiman + McCrumb + Walton; Green Man Press

Charles Vess's self-publishing debut is a collection of Olde British & Irish ballads, adapted by guest authors and exquisitely illustrated by Vess. It's very interesting and, for comparison, we get the text versions along with the adaptations. A comics first? (PaW) 8

Cerebus 200

by Sim + Gerhard; Aardvark-Vanaheim

A genuine comics milestone sees Cerebus overcome personality faults and resolve past history to face a new future. Visually unparalleled, this is an example of a comic-book actually doing something new. (RJJ) 9

<-> The epilogue to *Mothers & Daughters* and, having reformed the aardvark with the revelations of the preceding issues, Dave Sim leaves us in no doubt as to whether he has finished messing with his character. Two hundred issues in and the story's not finished yet. (IRS) 9

Dawn 2

by Linsner; Sirius

<-> This issue's tale, in which an alternative God asks Dawn to get the halo he forgot to take away from an alternative Lucifer is beautifully rendered, but I still feel it is missing a certain spark. (MK-H) 5

Donald Duck Adventures 36

by Lustig + Vicar + Barks; Disney

A rather nice farce from Lustig and Vicar, detailing an episode from Donald's and Neighbour Jones' everlasting wars. The centrepiece, of course, is the 10-page Barks tale. This issue, Donald (at his nastiest) tries to ruin his nephews' ice-taxi business, with predictable results. The art is particularly fine. (FPB) 8

Eternal Warrior 49

by Ostrander & Guice + Montano; Valiant

<++> Eternal Warrior Gilad Abrams' brush with death last month has made him insane, and on a routine mission to secure a vial of the Ebola virus in the heart of Russia, he snaps and sets off across a snow-covered wilderness. Good build-up to next month's final issue, with an on-form Ostrander script and some improving Jackson Guice pencils. (SiB) 7

Fantastic Panic 21

By GanBear; Antarctic Press

Snake Horn returns for a grudge match against Nee, but loses against Nee's former cook, Kyau-chan. All this happens in the yard of a Church (kennel) which belongs to Sister Onui, who is waiting for her God's Chosen Hero. It's weird slapstick adventuring with animal characters. Can't be bad. (PaW) 9

From Hell 8

Moore & Campbell; Kitchen Sink

<-> One of the best-ever comics series continues with another murder and loads more conspiracy stuff. Moore pulls no punches and Campbell's understated art carries the story forcefully. We rarely see work of this quality, so buy them all and revel in it. (MK-H) 7

Gremlin Trouble 2

By Bryan & Bryan; Anti-Ballistic

<-> Cypher penetrates the command computer and Commissioner Delage begins huge preparations against the awful reality of the Gremlin Princess. The scripting and art is witty if plain, but the plot lacks pace sometimes. Not bad, though. (PaW) 6

Japanese Eroticism

Compiled by Seward & by various creators; Yugen Press

Four very different adult manga stories, in the original Japanese with translations and notes on each facing page. The stories themselves vary from just strange, to shocking, to downright bloody weird — and demonstrates how to be erotic and not just explicit. Very educational (on several levels)! Hunt for it. (PaW) 10

Maison Ikkoku 51

By Takahashi; Viz

As a last request, Yusako's grandmother arranges a date between him and Kyoko. Just as the spark is igniting, they notice that tenants from the house are everywhere, keeping an eye on their progress! You can't help but root for them, everything is so well-executed. (PaW) 8

Mai the Psychic Girl Perfect Collection 1

By Kudo & Ikegami; Viz

A secret organization tests children to find the most powerful psychics in the world — and one of the most powerful is 14-year-old schoolgirl Mai. The art is Ikegami-trademark: larger than life gorgeous visuals and, while the plot *is* a bit clichéd, it's very well constructed as Mai comes to terms with her capabilities. (PaW) 10

Magical Twilight 2

By Yuki; Graphic Visions

<-> I'm still surprised Customs allowed me to have this — others have been destroyed for less! It isn't as strange as or as explicit as last issue, and the art plus touch-up seems to have slipped slightly, but it's still a sexy read. If you can find it. (PaW) 7

Manga Vizion Vol.11-8

by various creators; Viz

This is the first attempt in the West (not counting reprint organ **Manga Mania**) at publishing in huge Japanese-style anthologies. It's the best way to present new manga, cutting the price and including genres that the usual fanboy wouldn't touch from some of the best manga creators around. (PaW) 9

Manga Vizion Vol.19

By Takahashi, Oji, Ikegami, Kusunoki & Hagio; Viz

Four new, full-length episodes, three of them continuing series and the other another early Takahashi strip. Very high quality generally, but the Rumic World story has aged. For around £3.75, 96 pages of high quality (and *diverse*) manga. A veritable bargain! (PaW) 8

Mickey Spillane's Mike Danger 7

by Collins & Grau; Tekno

Danger relates a tale from his past involving androids and a red-haired damsel in distress. This mix of hard-boiled-detective and SF is still impressive. Walt Simonson provides the plot giveaway cover. (PCP) 7

Misery Special 1

by Peterson & Batt; Image

A teenager suffers at the hands of an abusive father until the powers kick in, allowing her to exact retribution. An enjoyable narrative, despite the familiar territory. (PCP) 8

Nausicaa Perfect Collection 1

By Miyazaki; Viz

The story of a very special young princess, Nausicaa, left to manage with the competing empires (human and otherwise) found outside the idyllic Valley of the Wind. What can I say? It's certainly one of the best comics *ever* to see print, and Miyazaki clearly cares about this world and its events, which are vividly brought to life by his superb art. (PaW) 10

Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind 5:5

By Miyazaki; Viz

There is a definite feeling of endgame about this third-to-last episode of Miyazaki's titanic epic. After shaking off a complex mind-trap the tiny heroine resumes her march to Shuwa and, when offered a sword, answers: "I have no need of weapons now." This issue's marvellous, understated art deserves a special mention. (FPB) 10

Neil Gaiman's Teknophage 8

by Jenkins & Davison + Klein; Tekno

The Teknophage reveals his role in Earth's earliest history in a story about tested faith and the nature of evil. While the art is occasionally inconsistent, each panel is full of life (and death), letting vibrant colour shine through. And there's a free copy of **Lost Universe**, which has a nice back cover. (RJJ) 8

Oz Squad 8

by Ahlquist & Loh; Patchwork

<-> An episodic issue showing Steve Ahlquiest's best and worst. He has almost no writing craftsmanship — the closing Western episode is astoundingly rushed and badly-written — but he is a thoughtful and inventive mind, and the power of his imagination, aided by Loh's lovely art, can get the reader through the worst patches. (FPB) 7

Poison Elves 5

by Hayes; Sirius

<-> Vido pleads for his funding to be continued; Lusipher assassinates an accountant. Not much humour this issue, but a solid script keeps it interesting. (MK-H) 6

Ragmop 3

By Walton; Planet Lucy Press

The Vatican's behind it all, can't you see? But can the Pope drag God away from this month's copy of **Heavenly Bodies** long enough to get something done? With a witty dialogue and script, and art that fits like a glove, Walton lampoons just about everything in this issue. (PaW)8

Reality Check! 1

By Rikki & Wolfgarth; Tavicat Comics

A tale about a schoolboy and what happens when his pet cat and a virtual reality system mistakenly come together — in the artificial world, the cat's a cute and furry catgirl! I like the idea, and it looks like the authors have enough ideas to carry it. The art's pretty nice, too. This could be superb if properly developed. (PaW) 7

Riot 2

By Satoshi Shiki; Viz

<-> The friction between born protector Axel and thief Billy the Kid continues to develop, but now people are beginning to zoom in on them to try to get hold of the Book's power. Satoshi's art is very tech-noir, and he's coming up with some interesting ideas. Develop them, please. (PaW) 7

Shi: Senryaku 2

by Tucci & various

Shi learns more from her grandfather's historical tales. Most of the stories are engaging, and some of the pencilling (especially on the cover) is very impressive. An original comic, and nearly as interesting as my history lessons. (DM) 8

Skeleton Key 5

by Watson; Amaze Ink

<+-> Tamsin must clean up the dregs of last issue's battle from her room before Mom gets home; Kitsune hits her head; a fraud is worked on the school and Geronimo comes up with an imaginative way to pay back Dirk and Dutch for not knowing that Geronimo was not a Hopi. (FPB) 7

Small Bodied Ninja High School 6

By Ford; Antarctic

In this conclusion of the Chicken fight from last issue, there's some nice character work but it's still a bit too simple. Maybe a "Junior" Ninja High, as well as Small-Bodied. (PaW) 6

Small Bodied Ninja High School 7

By Ford; Antarctic

<+-> A pair of fluffy cute lil' mice land in their UFO and make as if for peace. But they're actually after a Gem to power a massive weapon! The story is pleasantly silly and predictable, while the art is plain but very nice. Kawaii, ne! (PaW) 6

Swan 4

by Morieu; Little Idylls

<+-> A curiously imaginative, hyperkinetic story of Admiral Slake, Queen Alcestis' palace torturer, who remembers a fight with liberal pirates; Swan, the minstrel, who is a lot more than he seems; and Queen Alcestis, who murdered her husband and became a tyrant. Valid, if a bit overdone. (FPB) 6

Timewalker 0

by Hall & Perlin + Manley; Valiant

Special issue revealing that a female exile from the future was responsible for imbuing Ivar the Timewalker (along with Armstrong and Eternal Warrior) with their respective powers. A once vibrant and innovative company now resorts to all the clichés. (PCP) 2

Tug & Buster 1

By Hempel; Art & Soul Comics

The manly story of little Buster and his "stud" friend Tug (with exploding hair?). Follow them as they try to get laid! Witness Genital Ben's chat-up technique! Yet again, Hempel seems to have created supporting cast who I find funnier than the stars — it has brilliant moments but they don't gel properly. Almost an 8, but... (PaW) 7

Turok the Hunted 1

by Grell + Furman & Deodato + Couto; Valiant

The White Man enters Turok's tribe, begging for someone to show him the path to the mysterious White Buffalo. Turok (surprisingly as it's his title) volunteers, but neither man trusts the other, which promises for an interesting conclusion. Excellent artwork from Deodato and his protege, Mozart Couto, and some rich and vibrant colouring. (SiB) 8

Wandering Star 10

by Wood; Pen & Ink

Cassandra Andrews, the passionate and vulnerable heroine of this superb space-war series, is distraught at the thought of Earth allying itself to the Bono Kiro empire, which

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makes the Klingons look soft, and she uses emotions as a screen to deceive the Bono Kirian commander. One of the very best US independents, sensitive and beautiful. (FPB) 9

X-O Manowar 58

by Giffen & Smith + Guynn; Valiant

<+ -> X-O faces the might of Hotwire, who's threatening to destroy the city (how original). Then a rather heated battle with the inevitable result, and the subplots that introduce more muscle-bound superbeings who want to kill the poor armoured guy. Remember the days of supporting cast? Plot developments? Those days are gone. Giffen's arrival, however, gives a slight boost and the artwork is as good as ever. (SiB) 7

X-O Manowar 57

by Bailey + Golia & Sears + Kryssing; Valiant

<+> Back on Earth following his space adventures, X-O hooks up — unwittingly, I might add — with Gamin, a vivacious young woman intent on capturing his heart and stealing his armour. Bart Sears returns to art duties once more and, coupled with a surprisingly passable, at times entertaining script, it makes a welcome change. (SiB) 7

Weirdfall 2

By Howarth; Antarctic

Nyta has the power to nullify the effects of Weirdfall and use the natural laws of physics, an ability she proves by unexpectedly destroying the invaders! Then the weirdness calls for an alien visit. Not bad, but the art is ropy. (PaW) 6

Weirdfall 3

By Howarth; Antarctic

<+-> The weirdness continues, and the aliens try to correct it before it alters the laws of physics all over the galaxy! A smooth end to a series which could have been more imaginative, but wasn't bad anyway. (PaW) 6

X/1999 6

By Clamp; Viz

This issue continues to flow as easily as in previous issues — up until the last page, where we are presented with a cliffhanger and the legend: Continued in **Animerica**! This is no way to treat the fans who have stuck with it. Gee, thanks Viz, I'd expect this crap treatment from Manga Entertainment. (PaW) 6

UK TITLES

Astonishing Spider-Man 2

by DeMatteis + Bagley; Marvel UK

This American format reprint tale is excellent value for money. The first three parts of *Shrieking* (from **Amazing Spider-Man**) are what you get for your £1.99, and it's worth picking up just for the polished DeMatteis scripts. The only criticism I have is the unimaginative, low-rent cover design. (ST) 8

<++> The Peter Parker Spider-Man tackles more crazies (mirroring his own mental disintegration). Standard Spidey fare that won't stick in the gullet or linger in the memory, but a vast improvement over the previous indigestible concoction. (AW) 4

Body Guard 1

by Massop & Massop + Ogantade Hart + Griffiths + Wajenge + Foster; London Publishing House

What if *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)* were superheroes? A psychic in a coma is teamed with a violent bruiser. Let down by art slips, unerased pencils and speech balloons, this book has enough surprises to entertain, despite the premise sounding like a rejected Glen Larsen TV series. The quality of this series will depend upon its continuing performance. (RJJ) 6

Essential X-Men 2

by Lobdell + various; Marvel UK

<+-> The high-grade reprints from the original **(Uncanny) X-Men** reach number 303, and the death of Illyana. Of its ilk this is good, but is this all Marvel UK is capable of these days? (AW) 6

Space Precinct 1

by Carney + Cade & Erasmus + Currie; Manga Publishing

The inevitable comic of the Gerry Anderson SF cop show hits all the bases: adventure strip, comedy strip, cutaway drawing, features and a stickers album. A traditional-style comic for the Nineties that works rather well — but if the show doesn't make it to a second series, this won't be around, come Easter. (AW) 6

2000AD #966

by various creators; Fleetway

<+ -> The obligatory Mean Machine appearance in a so-so Dredd tale belies the fact that this is another good issue, from the excellent John Ridgway-painted cover to the brilliant *Chopper* and *ABC Warriors* strips. The high point, as ever it seems, is *Vector 13*. Writer Abnett provides us with a tale of the Cursed Dancer, where the acquaintances of a young upcoming dancer mysteriously start dying. It's illustrated by the brilliant Kevin Cullen, a master of colour artwork. (SiB) 7

A mixed bag; *Chopper* is wonderful, one of the finest characters ever created for this title. *Vector 13* gives an interesting short story of death and dancing. *ABC Warriors* is nicely painted, if plotless, while *Rogue Trooper* is ordinary, *Parasites* is dull and this issue's Dredd tale is atrocious. (IRS) 6

2000AD #969

by various creators; Fleetway

<-> The two-part Dredd tale, *The Man Who Broke the Law*, reaches a conclusion. An entertaining fill-in between the last major Dredd epic and the next. *Chopper* covers familiar ground, showing a distinct lack of imagination in the handling of the character. The highlight of the anthology, at the moment, is the current *ABC Warriors* story. (ST) 6

SMALL PRESS

Defective Comics 100

by Glenn Cooper; 18 Fields Park, Newbridge, Gwent NP1; 75p

Celebrating an amazing 100 issues, **Def** is looking better than ever as the Agents of Psyence lead-strip kicks off a new storyline, showcasing writer Rik Hoskins' unsurpassable talents. Hoskins is backed up ably by artist Darren Bardsley who, while looking a touch stiff and forced in places, handles the mammoth 28-page tale with style. Also of note is the very professional-looking Ian Richardson cover. The downside is the dodgy Superman spoof back-up strip. Why? All things considered, however, superb value and amply demonstrating why it has reached 100. (SiB) 7

Skin

by various creators; Flat A, 50 Hertford Rd, Liverpool; £1.50

In the usual mixed results from an anthology on one subject (obviously skin), special mention goes to the artwork of Richard Woods on *Skins* and Rolf on *A Tattoo*, while Bill Naylor's *Static* combines caricature and realism to good effect. (IRS) 6

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By Alan Moore + David J + Tim Perkins

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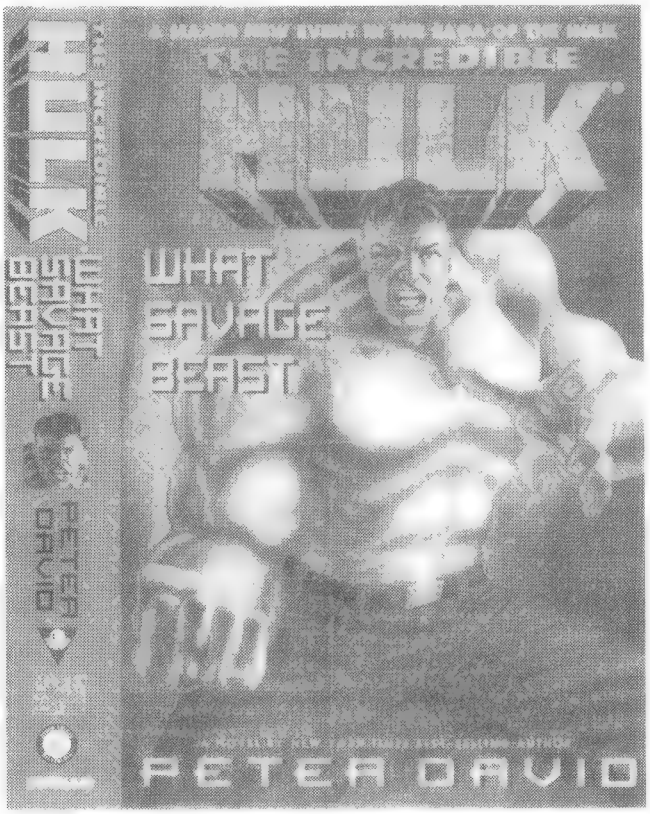

Incredible Hulk: What Savage Beast

by Peter David; Putnam / Byron Preiss / Marvel

THIS MAY prove to be a worthy swan song for Peter David's Incredible Hulk. Discovering that **The Hulk** could well be part of the deal being thrashed out between Marvel and Image, one can't help but postulate about certain events in **What Savage Beast**.

The first sixty pages of the book could easily slip into the six months of Marvel time which elapsed between **The Incredible Hulk** 426 and 427, but then continuity takes a major diversion. For the people who are unfamiliar with the Hulk's present circumstances, David does little to explain, because essentially this is a text story for the readers of *his* Incredible Hulk.

It begins with Bruce and Betty living in seclusion; Betty is working as a day nursery nurse; Bruce is surfing the internet and attempting to scratch out a living as a troubleshooter for corporations.

Things go fine until their quiet life is threatened by a rampaging, robotic Hulk — of whose origins it is decidedly unclear. Bruce defeats the construct, but it disappears without a trace and the blame for the destruction and chaos caused is directed squarely at him. He almost falls foul of Major Talbot (currently the bane of the Hulk in his comic) and reverts to the Savage Banner.

Fortunately, Betty reaches the ranting, raving Bruce Banner before any lasting impression is made on the locals.

The underlying subplot involves a retired scientist, Amos Trotter, and his theory of how he can restore order to the mind of Bruce Banner and his subsequent success at returning him to his "normal" state.

Seven months pass, The new-look Bruce is working as a teacher, while Betty is preparing for the birth of twins(!). Things couldn't get much better for the Banners, until complications with the birth send the story spiralling off into a direction you really wouldn't have expected.

The second half of the book deals with Bruce's attempts to restore order to his life. He is stuck in an alternate future timeline and, through a confrontation with Major Talbot, is once again trapped in the seven feet tall green-hued body.

Peter David deals with a lot of interesting elements of the Hulk, filling in minor continuity glitches from Greenskin's early days. He explains that The Hulk is in fact a shape-shifter and the different appearances seen over the years could be just the tip of the iceberg.

The action scenes are well handled, this is a Hulk story with more raw power on display than has ever been seen before but the fights are limited and the emphasis is put on thoughts, impressions and conversations.

There are guest appearances from both Doctor Strange (who David writes with a delicious aloofness) and Doc Samson, who isn't used enough in this book or the comic.

The ending is a little unsatisfactory, almost as if it had been hurriedly rewritten or the author could see no point in extrapolating the consequences.

What Savage Beast is competently written and rattles along at a grand pace. For the Hulk fan it is difficult to put down, but for the layman it poses far too many questions to make it a casual read. (PH) **6**

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A BIG non-event?

WITH the news that Jim Lee and Rob "Mr Deadline" Liefeld are to handle the destiny of some of the oldest characters in Marvel Comics history, there came the closest thing to a denial from Marvel since the apparent disappearance of their total publicity department.

There is definitely not a Marvel **Zero Hour** planned. At least not any more. It seems that any major crossovers have been shelved, outside of a potential Marvel vs Image crossover and a second Marvel vs DC bout.

The future, apparently, is in inter-company crossovers with everybody wanting to play. Rumours are rife about impending projects between all the major publishers.

● In the works is a DC/Dark Horse two-part **Batman vs Aliens** series by Ron Marz and Bernie Wrightson.

● A second **Silver Surfer/Green Lantern** title is planned from a Marvel creative team believed to be George Perez and Tom Grindberg.

● The **Avengers/Justice League** project could be on again. In the wake of his Avengers coup, Rob Liefeld is rumoured to have asked Marvel whether he can approach DC about reviving the old project.

● According to **Wizard**, **Spawn/Spider-Man** is on again. With the recent dealings between Image and Marvel, Todd McFarlane has suggested he would be prepared to write and draw the project.

● Reunited with Dale Keown, Hulk's meeting with Pitt could well be Peter David's swan song from the character he has single-handedly turned from Marvel's simplest character into its most complex one.

One would almost expect, with Dale Keown's recent rumblings with the Image boys, a few shots aimed at Image's bows. Keown recently left to form his own company and with Steve Gerber announcing he will not be scripting **Pitt** after issue 10, it's possible that Peter David might team up with his ex-Hulk collaborator Keown on the occasional issue of **Pitt**.

Over and out

THE unofficial word is that **The Hulk** is being cancelled to allow the character to play a vital role in the new Rob Liefeld-produced **Avengers** title.

When asked, Peter David's only response to date has been, "it strikes me as a touch odd considering that of the books mentioned, the **Hulk** is the one that sells the most."

Who's doing what?

STILL on the Image-Marvel deal, rumour is that the two artists will be expected to draw all twelve issues per year of their titles.

Liefeld is likely to recruit both Mike Deodato and Stephen Platt for **Captain America**. He is also likely to bring in Extreme regulars Eric Stephenson, Chap Yaep, Danny Miki and Jonathan Sibal III, if Marvel approves.

Jim Lee will obviously find twelve issues per year a tremendous strain — he could only manage nine per year when working on the **Uncanny X-Men**. He is expected to bring Scott Clark, Travis Charest, Brett Booth and inking partner Scott Williams along with him.

It is rumoured that Lee still wants the **X-Men/WildC.A.T.s** team-up to take place, but he faces a double dilemma with it.

Bob Harras has agreed to the team-up in principle, but Lee's commitment to the **Fantastic Four** and **Iron Man** would mean no time for him to be involved. He wants current **WildC.A.T.s** writer Alan Moore to co-script the series with Scott Lobdell, but has apparently met with negative reactions from both Moore and Marvel editors.

Cancellations galore!

IT SEEMS that there are a lot of old favourites heading for comics heaven in the next few months.

The Sandman bites the dust this month. **Love & Rockets** graces comic shops for the last time in March. DC buried **The New Titans** and watched as the Star Trek books boldly went where no comic books have gone before — to Paramount Comics! Marvel has just cancelled **Doctor Strange** for the umpteenth time and **Web of Spider-Man** disappeared to make way for a big pay check for Dan Jurgens.

And, of course, sometime next year (barring a miracle, or another turbulent week in the comics industry) we lose **The Incredible Hulk** and **The Mighty Thor**.

So imagine a small corner of comics fandom's sense of relief when they discovered that the clever use of wording by **Cerebus** creator Dave Sim, intimating that the series would draw to a premature close, failed to materialise in issue 200.

There was a strong indication that Sim intended to change his direction and finish the series at #200, rather than the proposed 300.

As early as issue 187, Sim dropped several hints that he was going to tie the series up early. Hearts were in mouths when **Cerebus** 200 hit the stands, but all for no reason and the book seems firmly on course for its February 2004 finale!

It was Destined

ALAN Davis's **The ClanDestine** could be set to return in 1996 in a new two-issue prestige series teaming up with **The X-Men**.

It looked likely that Davis would not be working for Marvel again

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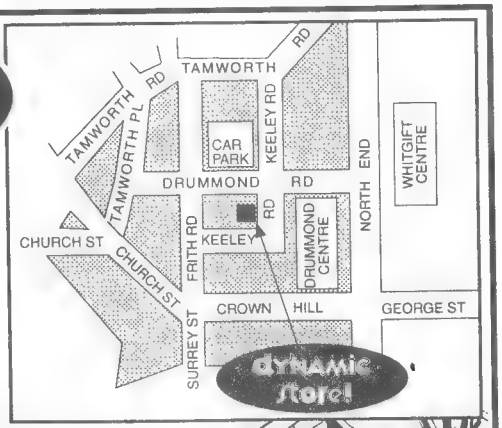

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after the marketing and production fiasco surrounding the launch of **The ClanDestine**, but it is rumoured that Bob Harras has given the Northants-based artist full control over story, as long as it has no undesired effects on **X-Men** continuity.

Marvel and DC merge

FEBRUARY 27 is the day that both DC and Marvel suspend publication of their scheduled books for one week, to replace them with twelve co-produced one-shots featuring combinations of Marvel and DC heroes — a result of the forthcoming mini-series.

While neither DC nor Marvel have announced anything specific, one of our ITMites has been tipped off as to what some of the pairings will be.

Look for mixes of Superboy and Spider-Man (Spider-Boy?), The Ray and Cyclops, Sub-Mariner and Aquaman, Captain America and Flash plus Dr. Doom and Doomsday (aptly named Dr. Doomsday...).

In the wake of the Marvel/DC crossover, a new hero will be created who will be jointly owned by both Marvel and DC. Because of his ability to co-exist in both super-hero universes, the character's name will be *Access* (not Crusader, as announced elsewhere). He will probably act as a catalyst for annual crossover stories between Marvel and DC.

Batty Captain Byrne

RUMOUR has it that John Byrne is hard at work on a Marvel/DC *Elseworlds* story set in World War II and starring Captain America and Batman.

There is also a rumour that Jerry Ordway wants to do a Captain (Shazam) Marvel/Captain (Mar-Vell) Marvel story, using the original Mar-Vell and set during the Kree captain's time as a regular resident of Earth.

Grab 'em while they're hot

ON a (hopefully) light-hearted note Warren (most things about to be cancelled) Ellis and Steven **(Punisher)** Grant suggested that a consortium buys the right to publish the Marvel Edge characters and employs them to write the books. Both were quick to suggest Marvel should sell **The Punisher** to anybody who thinks they can get any more mileage out of the old growler.

Let's eat Marvel

IT SEEMS that Marvel is indeed to open its own restaurants soon, in conjunction with Planet Hollywood.

Marvelmania restaurants are to open in New York, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Orlando (Florida) and London. No opening dates have been confirmed for the new ventures. Further updates can be obtained from the Heroes World US telephone's holding message.

Why, God, WHY?

OKAY, why Liefeld, Marvel? Is this management at work again, or some outside consultant who doesn't look at sales figures? It seems obvious to just about everybody else that sales have been sliding badly on the Extreme (Liefeld) imprint, so ... why Liefeld? Don't any of the other Image co-founders have more pulling power? Surely, Marc Silvestri or Whilce Portacio are selling higher quantities.

Do we have in the making yet another badly-planned change coming from the brains that gave us Marvel Mart and "let's not have an editor-in-chief"?

Change keeps things alive, but only when it's well researched and fully planned out before actually going ahead with it. We've had enough casualties, already.

A-Maze-ing stuff

MOVERS & Shakers received an anonymous tip that **Mazeworld** the much-vaunted collaboration between Alan **(Batman)** Grant and Arthur **(Button Man)** Ranson, is finally underway and should debut in **2000AD** in the late summer. (Is that all right, Arthur?)

Spider-scramble

NOT SINCE DC's pre-**Crisis** days has a character's continuity become so convoluted as Spider-Man's has done.

Marvel's major problem with Spider-Man was that he had crammed ten lifetimes into his relatively (by Marvel time) short crimefighting career. He'd grown up, lost his pimples and glasses, and got married (definitely lost something else, then).

Solving his rapid ageing seemed easy when it was suggested that a very old plot thread be reintroduced, resulting in a new Spider-Man (but not new at all) being introduced.

But, the problem is, despite Ben Reilly *actually* being Peter Parker, reaction to the new look and the new direction has been poor with disappointing sales.

No problem, they just reintroduce Peter Parker (who isn't Peter Parker at all, but a clone) and say the whole thing was a hoax.

Uh-huh. Spider-Man's writers have made it almost impossible to reverse the revelation that there has been a carbon-copy clone running around in Spidey's duds since **Amazing Spider-Man** 151.

Now it appears that Peter Parker (the false one, who still uses the name), despite giving up super-heroing, could well end up back in the webbed costume.

Fabian Nicieza told Movers that he almost walked off **Spider-Man:**

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The Final Adventure #4, because he had to rewrite the ending. He was to have had Mary Jane giving birth to her and Peter's baby, but his editorial staff decided that the birth should take place in one of the core titles and not a mini-series.

But Peter and Mary Jane have been written out of the Spider-titles, haven't they? So, everyone thought. But... watch this space.

The favourite theories as to how to solve this current continuity conundrum are: a) Time travel or b) Harry (Green Goblin II) Osborne's final revenge from the grave. Our money's on the latter.

Beatlemania — not!

WITH the second coming of the Beatles in full flow, music fans with long memories might recall how the Fab Four were turned down by Decca Records for lack of commercial potential.

However, comic fans with long memories may recall that the Liverpool lads appeared in a Marvel comics version of *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, a comic which was only released extensively in Japan, because Marvel didn't feel it was commercial enough for a US release.

A year ago, Marvel was considering adapting the story of the Beatles for its Marvel Music Line. The six-part history of the top-selling pop group of all time would have been written by Derek Taylor, the Beatles' long time press agent, and timed to coincide with the TV anthology and CD releases.

An obvious moneyspinner, you might think. Marvel didn't. They quietly dropped the idea. Reason: Lack of commercial potential.

... As opposed to giving work to Rob Liefeld, eh?

Get yer kit off!

NUDE superheroes could well be the next step in the evolution of the "hot babe" comic. Already there have been a spate of "Naked Cover" variations and **Penthouse Comix** has been portraying a super-heroine whose clothes just happen to get destroyed virtually every issue.

It is rumoured that one of the artists responsible for the boom in big butts and boobs is working on an all-nude issue of his hit title, which will be solicited, alongside the standard edition, as an adult version.

Wonder if there's a no-nudity clause in his contract with big M?

Broadway boom?

IN AN effort to promote awareness of their new comics, Jim Shooter's Broadway Comics recently sent polybagged preview copies of their first releases to retailers, free of charge. The intent was to help retailers gauge interest.

However Broadway was disappointed to learn that many retailers have instead been attempting to sell the previews at premium prices.

"We're very surprised by this situation," said Steve Schanes of Broadway. "We feel it is very short-sighted to go after a quick, high-priced sale on a no-value item when using them correctly can build long-term sales."

Altruistic words from Schanes, but many retailers — fearing another Defiant fiasco — would rather try to make a profit today than hope they will even be around tomorrow. Time will tell.

Fate against Daredevil

THE CURRENT creative team on **Daredevil** is moving to DC to take over **Fate**. JM DeMatteis and Ron Wagner, who leave the book after issue 350, are being given the chance to pull the sales of **Fate** around and hopefully give the struggling title a new lease of life.

DC is said to have stuck with the poor seller on the recommendation of the book's editorial staff.

It is not clear why DeMatteis and Wagner walked off **Daredevil**, but despite much postulation by comic watchers that the team may have been sacrificed in order to attract a "big" name creative team, it is believed that the usual editorial differences were to blame.

Comic whirled

POOR OLD Steve Holland, after the demise of **Comic World**, he ended up editing **Model and Collectors' Mart** for his employer Aceville.

Presumably as an ad-selling ploy, a new comic section has been introduced. This should have come as a relief to editor Steve who admits to knowing little about militarly models and such.

Sadly, his first comics column reveals an equal ignorance about key American comics history. A minor stir was caused when he co-wrote a piece about **Amazing Fantasy 15** in which he revealed that the UK priced edition is totally different to the US one, saying it was printed in the UK with British ads to boot. This despite the Overstreet Guide always maintaining that the UK priced copies have the same value as the US ones. (The reality is that only the price and month are changed on the black plate). So don't panic investors, your UK copies are more than the curios Steve called them.

The shame of it all, Steve. Now we know why you've only been looking after the UK side of Duncan McAlpine's Price Guide.

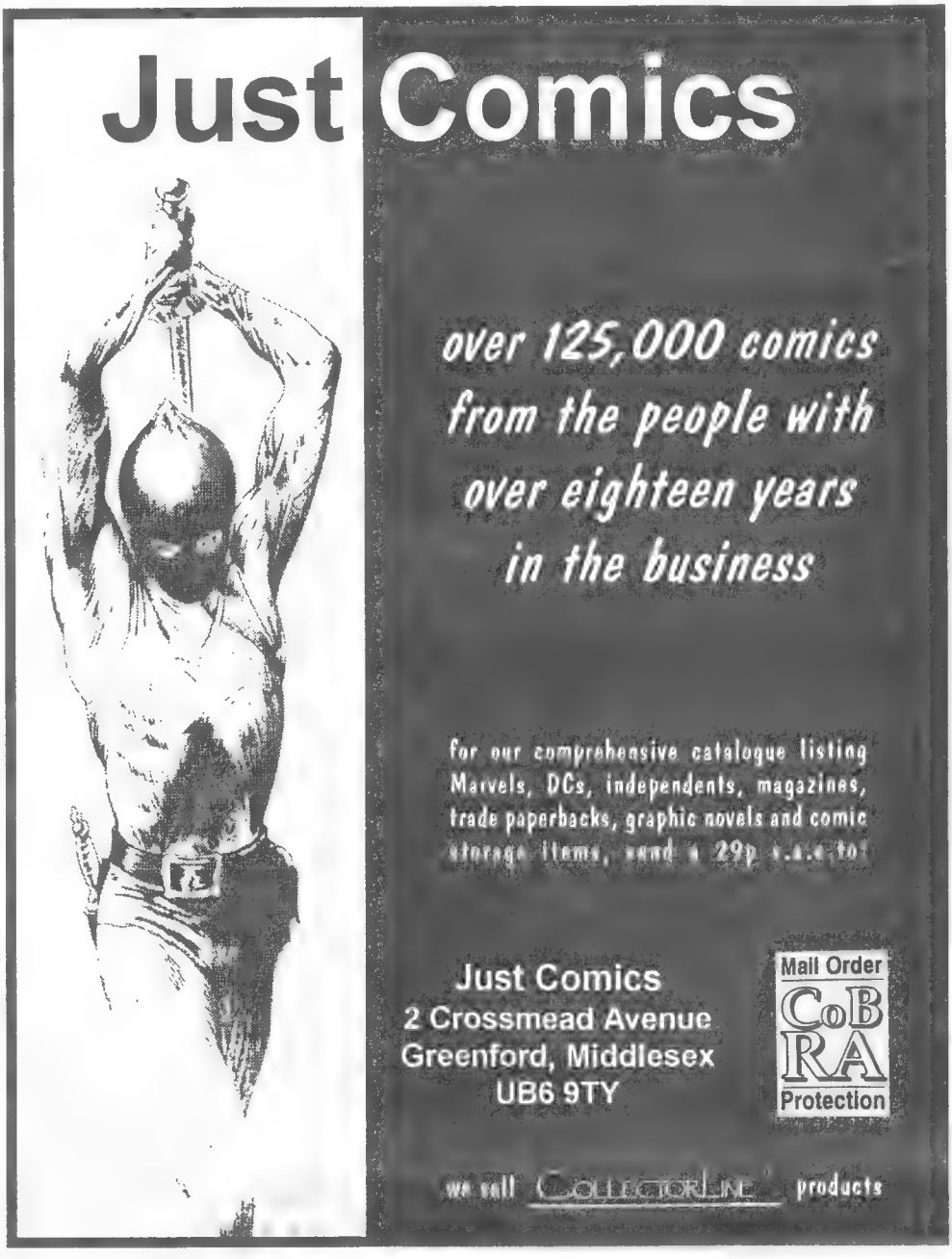
Trip, stumble and fall?

ALAN MOORE is a wanker. It's offical. Never mind the Blur and Oasis, here's the good stuff.

Tripwire, a North London produced small press title, has shaken off its indecisive directionless approach overnight to become the **Private Eye** of the comics industry.

Humble old Alan comes in for a mega-slag off from Gary (**Mobfire**) Ushaw (under the attention-grabbing heading used above) while elsewhere it is suggested that any criticism of a certain (ex-) comics publisher could result in a kneecap job.

The sort of stuff nobody else would dare print, support the magazine now, it will help towards the legal fees. Now available through Diamond (until they see what's in it) or from publisher Joel Meadows at 41 Parkside, Mill Hill, London NW7 2LM (£2 should do it).



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17 (Worlds Collide) . 1.00
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46 (Superman) 0.75
47-49 ..... 0.50
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51-54 55(JLA) 56 .... 0.50
57 (War of Gods) 0.75
Annuals: 1 ..... 1.50
2 ..... 1.25

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Ongoing: 0 ..... 1.25
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8-11 14-20 ..... 0.75
22 24 ..... 0.50

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2 ..... 0.75

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5 (Stroman) 1.00
6 (Charest) 1.00
7 (Charest) 1.00
8 (Charest) 1.00
9 (Pelletier) 0.75
10-22 24-27 29-31 .. 0.50

DC Comics Presents
2 (Garcia Lopez) 2.00
(Superman-Flash race)
16 37 46 ..... 1.00

Deadman (1986 mini)
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Deadman (Kelley Jones)
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Demon 0 ..... 1.00
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13-15 (Lobo in all) ... 1.00
16 18 ..... 0.75
19 (Lobo poster) 1.50
20 ..... 0.75
21 (Lobo) 1.00
24 26 29 30 ..... 0.75

listing continues overleaf

GOLDEN AGE & SILVER AGE

Action Comics (DC)
68g (1944) 35.00
106g (1947) 30.00

Adventures into the Unknown (ACG)
112vg- (1959) ... 4.00

All American Men of War (DC)
12fn- (1954) 27.00
(water,rippled, o/wise tight)
25vg (1955) 20.00
42ts,g+ 7.50
(1957, Kubert)
43vg+ 15.00
(1957, Kubert)

Amazing Adventures (Marvel, 1st series, 1961)
4vg- 25.00
(cvr rest & retouch)

Brave & Bold (DC)
26g 12.00
(cover repaired; 1/2" crnr gone; 2nd Suicide Squad)

Detective Comics
94vg (1944) 90.00
(some pro spine restor)
105vg- 69.50
129vfn- 165.00
170vg- 35.00
(some tape on spine)

EH! Dig this Crazy Humor Mag (Charlton)
1vg 21.00
(Ayers, Giordano; '53)

Fantastic Four
21vg- 25.00
(shop stamps)
32vg- 18.00
(1/2" cvr missing)

Fighting American (Prize; Simon & Kirby)
4fn- (1954) 54.00
(slight cover fade, sm spine tear, browning)

The Flash
70fn (1946) 110.00
(Kubert's Hawkman)
112vg- 15.00
(1st Elongated Man; glued spine)
113g+ 12.00
(1st Trickster; part taped spine)
116vg 12.00
120g+/vg- 12.00
127g+ 7.00
135g+ 6.50
(new Kid Flash suit)

Flyman (Archie)
32vg+ 5.00

GI Combat (Quality)
42vg (1956) 27.00

Green Lantern (DC)
6vg- 20.00
34vg- 5.00
(cup stain on cvr)

Golden Age & Silver Age listing continues on next page...

X-MEN FAMILY

Amazing X-Man
3 ..... 1.00

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Mini ($2.50): 1 2 . 1.75
Ongoing: 1($3.50) 2.00
7 ..... 1.25
13 ..... 0.50

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10 (X-Force) 1.00

Excalibur 36 38 . 1.00
60 ..... 0.75
61 ..... 1.25
81 82 ..... 0.75
83nm (Ellis) 1.50
"Sword is Drawn": $3.50 by Claremont & Davis 4.00
"Mojo Mayhem": $4.50 by Art Adams 1.75
"Air Apparent" $4.50: by Larsen, Lim ... 1.75

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Gambit & the Xternals 4 ..... 0.75

Generation X 5 7 2.00

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"Acts of Vengeance" $6.95 ..... 5.50

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6vfn- 2.50

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35 (Nightcrawler) 0.75
36 (Excalibur) 0.75
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64 65 68 69 (Wolv) . 0.75
73 (Weapon X Pt 1 by Windsor-Smith) 2.50
74 76 (Weapon X) ... 2.00
77-83 (Weapon X) ... 2.00
88 (Wolverine) 0.75
90-97 (Wolv-Cable) 0.75
98 101-110 (Wolv) ... 0.75
112-116 (Wolverine) 0.75
120-125 (Venom) 0.75
126 127(Vengeance) 0.75
131 142 (Wolv) 0.75
152 154 155 (Wolv) 0.75

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X-Men 28 ..... 1.25
(1st Banshee)

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3 (Jim Lee) 1.75

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1 ..... 1.00

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"Shadowgames" 2 3 1.50

Spider-Man: Mutant Agenda 0 1 2 ..... 1.50

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X-Factor
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75 (giant) 1.25
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86 (w/card) 0.75
87 88 89 ..... 0.75
92 ($3.50, holo) 2.50
97 98 99 ..... 0.75
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100 (metallic) 1.50
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106 ($2.95) 1.75
107-112 114 ..... 0.75
Annuals 4 ..... 1.25
5 ..... 1.75
6 ..... 1.50
7 8(w/card, bagged) 1.75

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1 (2nd print; gold) ... 1.00
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(16-18 bagged, w/card)
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25 (holo) 1.75
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38 ($2.95) 1.75
41 43 45 ..... 0.75
Annual 2 ..... 2.00

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Annual 2 (bagged with card) 0.75

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684 687-690 682 ..... 0.75
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33 (War of Gods) 1.00
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Annual 1 ..... 1.25

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continued from previous page

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(browning; Marvel chipping)

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1 2 ..... 1.25

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1 2 3 4 5 6 ..... 1.00
7 (Chapel) 1.50
8 10 12-15 19 ..... 1.00
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Chapel 1 2 ..... 1.25
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1 2 9-11 ..... 1.25

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Cyberforce Origins:
2 (Stryker) 1.00

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Images of Shadowhawk
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(#3+ by Genesis West:)
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4 5 ..... 1.00

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3 (1st print) 1.75
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Savage Dragon v Megaton Man
1 ..... 0.75

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2 (w/ Vanguard 0) .. 1.25

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What a year! A comics industry in turmoil, with business realities suddenly more amazing than any rumours or stories they publish. Reflected by Marvel's share value plummetting to an all-time low, sweeping changes are afoot, with only the first round (unofficially) announced this issue. As ever, UK shops have maintained a more conservative approach than their US counterparts. Less of the highs (from rampant speculation and super-hype) resulting in fewer casualties. But support your local emporium, they're getting a rough ride right now, and you'll miss them if they go!

As for me... what a year! From mowing down five year-old skiers in the French Alps in January through to the ***Purr*** *party in New York, the mayhem of the San Diego ComiCon, escorting Margot Kidder at the first-ever Prague Film Fest, jumping out of planes and crashing cars. It can be such a dull life being a desk jockey!*

Seasons greeting and best wishes for '96 from Sarah, Kerry-Ann, Phil and... Dez Skinn/Editor

Tim Hayes, 6 The Beeches Hartshill, Nuneaton

THIS is a note of appreciation for the last twelve issues. Your intro to **Comics International** 62's letters column summed up my feelings nicely.

But can I suggest perhaps a redirection of the *Comment* column, which is surely not the place for back-and-forth debate about other people's tastes.

Neither is the letter column for that matter, as the debate is inherently doomed. People's enthusiastic zeal always skids over into wild eyed rage or defensive sarcasm. The bad tempered squabbling currently on display does us all no credit, and to behave this way in one of the few remaining forums where the general public can watch seems woefully short sighted.

Re: *Crimson Tide*'s Silver Surfer in-joke. I've read that the film's pop culture references were supplied by uncredited script polisher Quentin Tarantino. A man who has previously enthused about the Jim McBride remake of *Breathless*, in which the Buscema Surfer makes an appearance. (Incidentally, I've also read that the designer of *Goldeneye*'s title sequence, Danny Kleinman, drew part of his inspiration for that sequence from Steve Ditko's Doctor Strange designs.)

Re: Comment, couldn't agree with you more, Tim. Hence the editorial note at the end of this issue's instalment, but you should see the comments we reject! Dez

Andy Smith, PO Box 8892 London SW15

TWO POINTS, the first regarding *Q&A*: You left out two **Blueberry** books published by Methuen in 1977. (These being the very earliest Blueberry with rather humdrum artwork).

Another Basil Wolverton Wolverwork for your list is the horror story with man-eating flying eyes(!). It was printed (in English) in **Sortez La Chienne**. These darker, more serious stories are my favourites. Does *anybody* know how many he actually produced?

Regarding *Comment*: Alex Thomas makes some valid points. But he does muddle up "alternative" with small press. Many alternative comics are hardly small press (**Love & Rockets**, **Naughty Bits**) whereas a fairly large number of small press titles do feature superheroes.

He also muddles up mainstream titles with superhero titles. There are many successful mainstream books which are neither superheroic nor alternative (**Calvin & Hobbes**, **Bone**, **TinTin** and **Blueberry**, for instance).

Neither should he be so squeamish about **Zum**'s vitriolic sarcasms, they dole it out to all and sundry. In his indignation, Alex forgets the main argument against slagging off fanboys. It is an unequivocal fact that fanboys happen to be human beings. Which is to say: physically capable of reading and (in my view) enjoying many alternative comics (Try the latest **Optic Nerve** or **Hate**). I'm not saying these are as exciting as half-naked babes flying through space spewing thunderbolts of lightning. Only: It's perfectly readable stuff.

On the other hand, alternative authors should stop making a fuss about the "mainstream" and instead try to figure out how to reach the real mainstream, ie: the millions who read no comics at all.

Miss A. Kirk 76 St Mary's Court, Willenhall West Midlands

IN RESPONSE to Mr Cooper's letter (**Comics International** 60), moaning about Nowhere Comics and how rude they were supposed to be. What is he, a prude?

Sex talk is everywhere now and

the 14 year-old he was going on about probably *does* it with his partner. Does Mr Cooper also assume that because this sort of talk was going on while he was in there that it goes on all the time?

Well! I'll tell you it doesn't. I've heard them talking twice like that and I've been going there for over two years now.

So facts straight, not assumed next time, please Mr Cooper.

Reuben Willmott
19 Melbourne Rd, Ipswich

ALEX Thomas (**Comics International** 62, *Comment*) is of course quite right in what he says about us small pressers. We are all sad and lonely people.

Any chance you could start a lonely hearts type column up for us? Merry Christmas!

It's the lowest form of wit, Reubs!

John Miller
Inverleith Row, Edinburgh

IT'S interesting to see your list in **Comics International** #62 of December's nationally distributed DC comics. Without, I hope, sounding like one of the "things ain't what they used to be" brigade, I really feel like pointing out the noticeable narrowing of scale of what's available in UK newsagents compared to, say 1972, when the likes of me could walk up the High Street in ye Scottish small town of Lanark and splash out on a stack of ten or twelve Marvels and DCs and not think twice about it.

The new glossy paper Marvels and DCs may be beyond the means of some of the younger readers' pocket money (and DSS punters) and are glossy luxury items for those in the high income brackets.

I noted the comment in *Movers and Shakers* on the '60s Gold Key **Star Trek** comic, which went on sale in the UK before *Star Trek* was shown on UK television.

They had no reference photos? That doesn't surprise me. In **The Man From U.N.C.L.E** comic (also Gold Key) the secret agents didn't look at all like Robert Vaughn or David McCallum!

Thanks for another jolly issue, which I read from cover to cover, as I usually do.

A readership query here: copyright on faces can now prevent comics adaptations (or continuations) from using actor likenesses in film spin-offs (without additional royalties and licenses being paid). Here in the UK, our laws are different, so we never had such problems with ***House of Hammer, Doctor Who*** *and such like. But when did this kick in for America? It would be a handy historical re-write to excuse Gold Key under current US laws, but outside of make-up like the constantly guarded Universal monster faces (from which the Karloff, Chaney or Lugosi estate received nothing) exactly when did this become a problem for comics? Over to historians out there. Dez.*

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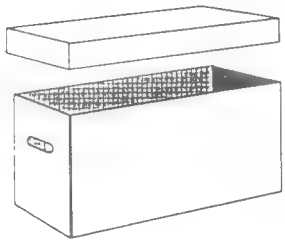

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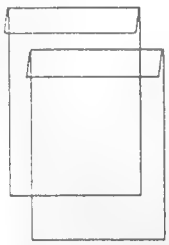

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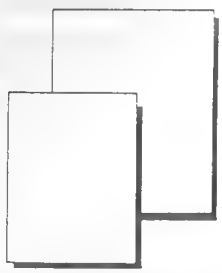

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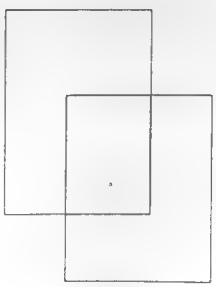

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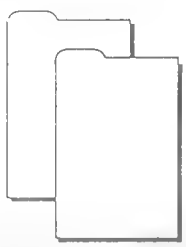

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Adults only! More delays! Please be patient things are being sorted out! Carnel (true stories of porn stars), Eros, NBM (Manara, Winslade, Will Simpson, etc), Penthouse, Verotik, Venus, Manga videos and much more! SAE for list/details to Spink! 27 Crown Avenue, Basildon, Essex SS13 2BE.

WANTED

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Wanted: **Sandman** 2-4; *X-Files* freebies and chase cards; **Witchcraft** 2-3; **Death Gallery**; **American Freak** 5; **Moonshadow** 4. Swap for: **Magnus** 9; **Unity**; Defiant/Valiant keys; **Deathmate**; **New Mutants** 86; **Dawn** 1; **Shi/Razor** special; **Invisibles** 1-11; **Black Orchid** 1-3; **Duckman.** Contact J. Stribley, 27 Lagoon View, Barnstaple EX31 3LD.

Wanted: any *Star Wars/Star Trek* toys and any cheap **Gen 13** comics/merchandise. Please contact Daniel Mokades at 27 Mount Pleasant Road, London NW10 3EG, or telephone: 0181 459 5110.

Wanted: **Weird Tales** (editor: Gordan M. D. Garb) fall issue 1 1984 (released 1985) and winter issue 2 1985 (released 1986), both volume 49, published by Brian Forbes/The Bellerophon Network, California. Comic magazine. Contact Roger Newson, 32 Rosemary Avenue, Felixstowe, Suffolk IP11 9HX. Tel: 0139 427 7603.

Wanted: *X-Files* promotion cards P1 and P2. Willing to pay reasonable price or swap for other X-Files-related items — even **X-Files** 1. Also wanted **The Sex Files** by Penthouse — highish prices. Call Dave on 0151 428 9723, or write to: 20 The Paddock, Gateacre, Liverpool L25 5PZ for general X-Files gossip or offers/swaps.

Wanted: **Tom Puss Comics** (Birn Brothers, 1949) will pay £150; **Panda Comics** (same series, 1949) will pay £100; **Tom Puss in Rhymeland** will pay £100, **Jack & Jill** all colour gift books (edited by A. Mills) will pay £40. Contact Piet Koudenburg, Cortenhoeve 14, 2411 JM Bodegraven, NL — Netherlands.

Wanted: issues of **Vulcan** (1975-1976); **Lion** 257; **Godhead** 1 (Anubis Press) signed edition; **Wonder Women** 178-204; **Outlanders** 1-33 (Dark Horse); **Anne Rice's Vampire Companion** 1 (Innovation); **I, Lusiphur** 1-8 (will pay £5 each). Contact Anthony Pick, 20 Grove Road, Hoylake, Wirral, Merseyside L47 2DT, or telephone: 0151 632 4640.

Wanted: **Preacher** 4 & 6; **X-Men Unlimited** 4 and a complete run of **Sandman Mystery Theatre** or will swap for a complete run of **Spawn**. Also, does anyone have the issues of **Hellblazer** where John Constantine gets lung cancer, and the one with the great love story which the review team was going on about in **Comics International** 50. Contact Robert Okine, 25 Delany House, Thames Street, Greenwich SE10 9DQ. Tel: 0181 853 3242 (after 3pm)

Wanted: **New Adventures of Superboy** 1-54; **Super Freaks** 1-47; **Superman** 237 241 243-248 250-252 254-257 259-265 267 272 275 276 279 283-284 287 291 292 295-302 304-307 309-312 314-317 319 320 327-329 400-402 405 406 413 414 417 418 421 422; any Superman-related **DC Digest** or tabloid limited collectors' editions. Also, any Superman non-comics memorabilia. Please write to: Anthony Sheeran, 11 Bredbury Road, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 7AG.

Wanted: English 1950s space, horror, crime, superhero, jungle and western comics including: **Space Adventures, Spaceman, Whiz, Master, Nyoka, Captain Marvel, Black Magic, Space Commando, Marvelman, Planet, Crimson Comet, Captain Valiant, Swift Morgan, Roy Carson, Mystery in Space, Marvel Family, Super Thriller, Speed Kings, Strange Worlds** + similar 1940s/'50s items. Please contact Mike Morley, 5 Crompton Avenue, Sprotboro Road, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN5 8ED.

Wanted: Fleer *X-Men '95, Batman — Saga of Dark Knight, Spawn*, etc trading cards. Swap for same/similar. Also, 1980s DC & Marvel comics eg: **Captain Atom** to exchange for similar. Contact Mark, 6 Blanshards Lane, North Cave, Brough, North Humberside HU15 2LN.

Wanted: interviews, articles, magazines, opinions, books, etc which discuss graphic novels (for dissertation). In return, a big thank you and your name in print. Maybe cash too. Contact Briony Chappell, Reading University, Typography, 2 Earley Gate, PO Box 239, Reading, Berks RG6 2AU. E-mail: ltuchapl@reading.ac.uk

Wanted Marvels: **Gunsmoke Western** 56 78-80; **Journey into Mystery** 51 54 55 65; **Rawhide Kid** (Kirby) 17 21 22 24; **Strange Tales** 67-69; **Strange Worlds** 4; **Two-Gun Kid** 52-54; DCs: **Adventure Comics** 210 211; **All Star Western** 58-111 114-117; **Batman** 30 31 34-37 39-76 78-80 83 85 88 89 92 94 99 100; **Blackhawk** 9-12 14-22 24-31 33 35 36 38 42-44 48-50 52-54 56 58 65 67-70 83 93 96 105 121; **Detective** 200-207 209 210 212-216 218-220 225 229 230 237 241 254; **House of Mystery** 61-66 68-73 75-78 84; **House of Secrets** 13 15 16; **Mystery in Space** 3-5 7 9-11 13-19 21 34 35 38 39 44-47 51 52; **My Greatest Adventure** 2 5 10 11 13 14; **Our Army at War** 83 86 87 93 95; **Strange Adventures** 1-116 118-128 132; **Superboy** 63; **Superman** 12 14 15 17-27 29-33 36-48 50-56 59-64 67 71 75 76 83 85 87 88; **Tales of the Unexpected** 3 14 15 17 21 26 29; **Western Comics** 1-85; **Wonder Woman** 103 104 137 185 191 198 200; **World's Finest** 71-74. Indies: **Adventures of the Fly/Flyman** (Archie) 3 8 34 37; **Alarming Tales** (Harvey) 1 3-5; **Avenger** (ME) 3 4; **Boy Comics** (Gleason) 3 4 6 7 9 10 12-17 20 22 23 25 27 28 30 33 44 51 55 57 59 60 64 65 67 68 70-72 74 82 83 85 86 89-91 95 101-107 109-113 115-119; **Daredevil** (Gleason) 1-15 17-32 34-45 47-56 58 60 62 66-79 81-85 87-91 93 95 96 99 101 102 106 108 109 111 112 118-123 125-134; **Doctor Solar** (GK) 26; **Fighting American** 1-3 5-7; **Magnus** (GK) 27; **Tales of the Mysterious Traveler** (Charlton) any Steve Ditko except 1 & 11; **ThunderBunny** (WaRP) 1; **Tor** (St John) 2 3 5. Contact: Dez Skinn, 8 Trinity Rd, London N2 8JJ.

Does anyone have: **Cat & Mouse** 1-3 15-on (Aircel-Malibu); **Supersonic Soul Puddin'** 2 (Four Cats Funnybooks); **Skye Blue** 1-2 (Mu Press); **The Killer Fly** 1 (Slave Labor); any issue of **Ehlissa** (Highland Graphics); **Blood and Kisses** 3 (Fantaco); **Bloodlines** 4 (Vortex); **Oz Squad** 1-4 (Brave New Worlds); almost any of Hanther's **Tandra** albums (Hanthercraft); **Kendra - Legacy of the Blood** 3-on (Perrydog Press); **Wolff & Byrd** 1 (Exhibit A Press); **Border Worlds** 2 (Kitchen Sink); **Swan** 1 (Little Idylls); **Redfox** 1-4 12 16 & 19 (Valkyrie Press); any **Lethargic Comics**; **The Hoon** 2 (Eeenieweenie Comics); **Thieves and Kings** 4 (I-Box); **Laundryland** 3 (Fantagraphics). Contact Fabio P. Barbieri, 33 Brewster Road, Leyton, London E10 6RG. Telephone: 0181 539 7842.

Wanted: **Wolverine/Gambit: Victims** 1 3 & 4; *Simpson 2* D4 A2 A3 A4; *1982 Topps Football* 434. Contact I. Ramadi, 116 The Ridgeway, Kingsbury, London NW9 0UG.

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Fanzine and small press titles must not be offered for sale before being printed. To verify publication, samples should be sent with advertising copy.

Bulldog Adventure Magazine 9 is out now! The epic begins here! Ideal jump-on point for new readers! £1.50 inc p&p from: Jason Cobley, 33 Willowbank, Fazeley, Tamworth, Staffordshire B78 3LS.

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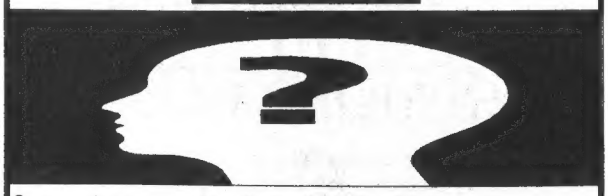

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eVENTS

An at-a-glance guide, this listing gives the dates and locations of all forthcoming events advertised this issue. A free service for advertisers, the bracketed number after each entry denotes the page this issue where the advertisement with full details appears.

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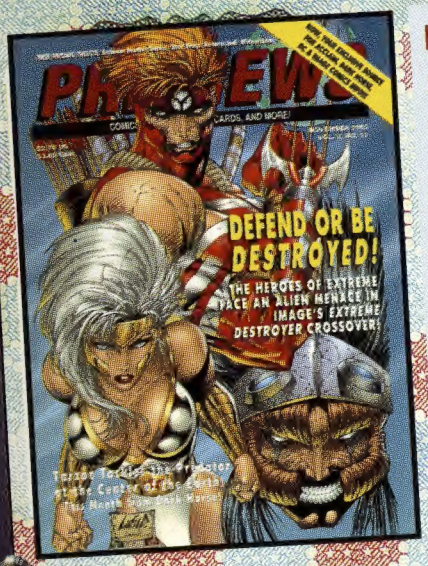

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